

## Selected Writings 2012-2024



### Hermetica

[Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition](#)

[Corpus Hermeticum I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII](#)

[Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum](#)

[On Translating Tractate XIII](#)

[A Note On Noesis In Tractate XIII](#)

[Anaximander, Imbalance, And Opposites](#)

[Lawh al-Zumurrud](#)

[Notes On De Vita Coelitus Comparanda](#)

### Religion

[The Gospel Of John: Chapters One—Five](#)

[The Way Of Jesus Of Nazareth](#)

[The Johannine Weltanschauung](#)

[Physis And Jesus Of Nazareth](#)

[The Beatitudes](#)

[Classical Paganism And The Ethos Of Christianity](#)

[Tu Es Diaboli Ianua](#)

[On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision](#)

[A Note Concerning θεϊότης](#)

[Deo Volente And The Epistle Of James](#)

[Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John](#)

[Concerning Roman Catholicism](#)

[Religion, Empathy, And Pathei-Mathos](#)

[Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos](#)

[A Sacramental Link](#)

**Philosophy of Πάθει Μάθος / The Numinous Way**

[The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos](#)

[From Mythoi To Empathy](#)

[Greek Terms in The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos](#)

[Impersonal Abstractions And The Modern World](#)

[Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos](#)

[Some Metaphysical Questions](#)

[Suffering and The Culture of Pathei-Mathos](#)

[Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture](#)

[Time And Otherness](#)

[The Natural Balance of Honour](#)

[Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis](#)

[Appreciating Classical Literature](#)

## **Autobiographical**

[The Development of The Numinous Way](#)

[Myngath](#)

[Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing](#)

[A Premature Grieving](#)

[A Matter Of Honour](#)

[Some Selected Favourites](#)

[A Rejection of Extremism](#)

[Extremism, Terrorism, Culture, And Physis](#)

[Extremism And Reformation](#)

[Research, Primary Sources, And Pathei-Mathos](#)

[The Centuries, Not The Decades](#)

## **Poetry**

[Relict – A Selection of Poems](#)

[Four Poems](#)

[Some Poems Of A Vagabond](#)

## **Ancient Greek Translations**

[Regarding The Translations](#)

[The Agamemnon of Aeschylus](#)

[Sophocles: Oedipus Tyrannus](#)

[Sophocles: Antigone](#)

[The Odyssey Books One, Two, Three](#)

[Sappho: Poetic Fragments](#)

[Anaximander](#)

[Heraclitus: Some Translations and Notes](#)

[One Perceivration: Concerning Translations](#)

## **About**

[The Hubris Of Abstractions](#)

[Seven Interviews](#)

[Misunderstanding Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos](#)

[The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt](#)



All items:  
Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license

• • •

### The Numinous And Denotata

The intuition, the personal experiencing, of the numinous is in my fallible opinion of fundamental importance in understanding our physis (φύσις) as human beings and our relation to Being, the source of beings, sentient or otherwise.

As I noted in my 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* [1], the term numinous derives from the classical Latin *numen* and denotes "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's *a priori* (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was *sui generis*, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, [2] or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi.

For such extrapolation by the very nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris, a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus poetically and somewhat enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲν ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται. [3]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [5]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [6]

78

12. HERAKLEITOS

80 [62] Orig. c. Cels. VI 42 p. 111, 11 εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών?].

Thus δίκη is the natural balance of conflicting opposites and thus an ancestral way of reconciliation or of resolving conflict, often misunderstood as a 'unity of opposites' with a dialectic of opposites with its inherent causality thus mistakenly considered a means to understanding, development and a believed in concept of necessary change.

The notion of discord so being born by denotata sundering physis is also and perhaps better expressed by Anaximander who like Heraclitus has been much misunderstood:

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν [7]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [8]

Which expresses the causality inherent in the beings - existents, ἰδέα/εἶδος - that denotata brings-into-being. They are

unbalanced, and since they are causal entities will sooner or later pass away even though in their living through the thoughts and actions of mortals they usually manifest and bring-into-being discord: hence why Heraclitus wrote εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν.

This is in contrast to the individual wordless-knowing that empathy brings-into-being, and explains the fundamental flaw of Plato's ἔλεγχος which led for example to him having Protagoras saying that the poet Simonides does not speak 'correctly', οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγει [9] even though poetry could possibly be - as an intimation of the numinous - an attempt to wordfully presence what causal abstractions conceal, with the attempt by Socrates to dispute such an assertion by Protagoras seeming to fail. [10]

Which is perhaps why Aristotle (Metaphysics, 982β) quoted a saying attributed to Simonides: θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας which follows ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι,

It is hard to be a purely noble person [...] a god alone has that privilege [11]

With the context of Aristotle's quotation his statement,

ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ σοφία περὶ τινὰς ἀρχὰς καὶ αἰτίας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη, δῆλον. Metaphysics, 982α

It is evident that sapientia is a knowing of axioms and of sources [12]

and because

ἀλλ' οὔτε τὸ θεῖον φθονερὸν ἐνδέχεται εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, οὔτε τῆς τοιαύτης ἄλλην χρὴ νομίζειν τιμιωτέραν. ἡ γὰρ θειοτάτη καὶ τιμιωτάτη: τοιαύτη δὲ διχῶς ἂν εἴη μόνη: ἦν τε γὰρ μάλιστα ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστί, κἂν εἴ τις τῶν θείων εἴη. Metaphysics, 983α

it is not possible for the divine to be envious; indeed, as the maxim goes: songsters make many a false claim; nor should any other [epistēmê] be considered the more honourable, for it is divine because honourable in just two ways: if epistēmê is of the divinity or of the divine. [13]

Which returns us to whether some poetry such as the lyric attributed to Simonides as preserved by Plato can, for we mortals, be an intimation of the numinous, as some music - such as the counterpoint of JS Bach - is believed by many musicians and others to be.

If we presume to substitute 'the numinous' for 'the divine' and for 'the divinity' (the theos) then an epistēmê is τίμιος - honourable, precious, worthy, prized - if it is of, if it presences, the numinous; and it is interesting to note that, well over a thousand years after Aristotle, τίμιος in the Greek Orthodox tradition implies 'holy' as in Τίμιος Σταυρός, the Holy Cross.

In addition, as Aristotle - citing an ancient maxim - writes: παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, 'songsters make many a false claim', and that because of both the nature of denotata and our physis as human beings.

## Empathy, The Hermetic Tradition, And Our Human Physis

The reality of empathy in relation to the numinous is two-fold - jumelle, as is our physis as human beings according to the Corpus Hermeticism - because although a means to appreciate, to discover, to feel, to know, the numinous without the need for mythoi, denotata and the associated exegesis, dialectic and discord, it is unappreciated, underdeveloped.

° Empathy is unappreciated, because of our physis: as is explained using Greek mythoi and in terms of the mystic hermetic tradition, in the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

"distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one [...] This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day." [14]

This is further explained, again using Greek mythoi and in terms of the hermetic tradition, in tractate XI, which returns us to Aristotelian honour and takes us to where σοφία - qv. the quotation from Metaphysics, 982α above - is personified and explained as manifesting the noble, the beautiful, good fortune (εὐδαιμονία), arête, and Aion:

"The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on

Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presented in perceivization, with perceivization presented in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivization and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine [...]

Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos." [15]

The essence of which, beyond mythoi, is (i) that our physis is both "male-and-female since of a male-and-female father" and (ii) that the numinous can be apprehended, presented, by and through "the noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête and Aion," with Aion understood as the eikon (εἰκὼν) of the Kosmos [16] and - qv. Tractate XI, 2-4 - the cause of changement coming-into-being on Earth and thus of what is changeable and decayable and thus dies.

Which changement coming-into-being, and its change and eventual decay applies, in the perspective of Aeons - of millennia - to denotata and what existents, such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions, denotata has brought-into-being.

° Empathy is underdeveloped because it seems that for millennia we mortals - or more specifically, perhaps a majority of the males of our species - have neglected the reality of our physis being jumelle: both male-and-female, both masculous and muliebral, with such muliebral physis the geneture of empathy. [18] As described in terms of Greek mythoi and the hermetic tradition in the Pœmandres Tractate in relation to the seven spheres:

"Those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivization; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivization; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artissements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death." [19]

The masculous is evident in patriarchy, in patriarchal religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam; in denotata, in dialectical confrontation including Plato's ἔλεγχος, as well as evident in the desire, the masculous need, for competition and for armed and personal conflict. The muliebral is evident in personal virtues such as honour, benignitas, empathy, and wordless personal methodologies such as the epistêmê that is mystical contemplation.

The neglect of empathy is understandable since the masculous - as manifest for example in patriarchy, patriarchal religions, and denotata, codified as denotata has been in the ἰδέα and ideal of Empires and nation-States - has dominated mortal life for millennia to the detriment of the muliebral.

## **The Uncertitude Of Knowing**

Empathy, with its personal horizon, is or can be the geneture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings, while the masculous is the geneture of that certitude of individual knowing that infuses codified denotata such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions.

Thus, in terms of numinosity, empathy presents or can present to us in the immediacy of the personal moment an individual intimation or wordless knowing of the numinous, which intimation or knowing places our mortal life, and all we connect with it or is connected to it, into a supra-personal perspective which is a-causal and of Being itself, the source of beings and all being; of which Being we as a mortal are one finite deathful emanation. Which perspective brings with it or can bring with it the wordless knowing of the unwisdom of words.

Thus, while some mythoi Greek or otherwise, some mystical traditions ancient or otherwise, some poetry and some metaphysical speculations Greek or otherwise, can or may provide some insights into our physis, their wordfull expression or expressions are subject or have been subjected to exegesis, just as written expressions of religious-type revelations always are; with such exegesis more often than not the geniture of a certitude or certitudes of knowing.

Which returns us to the personal wordless knowing of empathy and its discoverable embedded uncertainty of knowing, with personal virtues such as honour and benignitas one means - an ancient epistêmê - to try to live according to such a wordless knowing, with personal honour a melding, a hermetic ἐναντιοδρομία, of masculine and muliebral thus returning us to the physis that was cleaved asunder and which in others is still being cleaved asunder.

According to an ancient saying attributed to Heraclitus which may contain a fallible intimation of this and possibly was one of first written intimations of it:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7)

All by geniture is appropriately apportioned with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

David Myatt  
17.iii.22  
v.3

ooo

[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/from-mythoi-to-empathy>

[2] The terms ἰδέα/εἶδος refer to Plato's postulation of what has been termed 'forms' - of a type of metaphysical existent such as an 'idea' - with ἰδέα used for both singular and plural instances, and εἶδος (singular) often used by Plato instead, as for instance at Phaedo 103ε, ὥστε μὴ μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν αἰὲν χρόνον.

In regard to the use of εἶδος and the postulation, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1078β, 14-15, συνέβη δ' ἡ περὶ τῶν εἰδῶν δόξα τοῖς εἰποῦσι διὰ τὸ πεισθῆναι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῖς Ἡρακλειτείοις λόγοις ὡς πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰὲν ῥεόντων, ὥστ' εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη τινὸς ἔσται καὶ φρόνησις, ἑτέρας δεῖν τινὰς φύσεις εἶναι παρὰ τὰς αἰσθητὰς μενούσας: οὐ γὰρ εἶναι τῶν ῥεόντων ἐπιστήμην.

[3] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[4] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[5] Fragment B80.

[6] I have transliterated πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη because both πόλεμος and δίκη should be regarded, like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation. To render them blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical, since δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary/ancestral way, and so on.

[7] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[8] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

[9] Protagoras, 3396

[10] Relevant quotations from Simonides are at 339β, 339ξ and the poem by Simonides that Plato preserved is, in the version by J. Aars, *Das Gedicht des Simonides in Platons Protagoras*, 1888,

Ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι χαλεπὸν,  
χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον.  
<...>  
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον νέμεται,  
καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.  
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας· ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,  
ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ κατέλῃ.  
πράξας μὲν εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,  
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς <τις>,  
καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον ἄριστοι, τοὺς κε θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.  
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι δυνατὸν  
διζήμενος κενεᾶν ἐς ἄπρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,  
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·  
ἐπὶ δ' ὕμιν εὐρὼν ἀπαγγελέω.  
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,  
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδῃ  
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν· ἀνάγκη δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.  
<...>  
<οὐκ εἰμ' ἐγὼ φιλόμωμος> ἔξαρχεῖ γ' ἐμοί,  
ὃς ἂν ἦ κακὸς μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰδώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,  
ὕγιῃς ἀνὴρ, οὐδὲ μὴ μιν ἐγὼ  
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων  
ἀπείρων γενέθλα·  
πάντα τοι καλὰ, τοῖσί τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται.

The more recent arrangement and reconstruction cited as PMG 242 is somewhat different:

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι  
χαλεπὸν χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ  
τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον·  
<..>  
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον  
νέμεται, καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰ-  
ρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.  
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ  
  
ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,  
ὃν ἂν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ κατέλῃ·  
πράξας μὲν γὰρ εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,  
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς [  
[ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὲ καὶ ἄριστοί εἰσιν  
[οὓς ἂν οἱ θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.]  
  
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι  
δυνατὸν διζήμενος κενεᾶν ἐς ἄ-  
πρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,  
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι  
  
καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·  
ἐπὶ θ' ὕμιν εὐρὼν ἀπαγγελέω.  
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,  
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδῃ  
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν· ἀνάγκαι  
δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.  
<...>  
[οὐκ εἰμὶ φιλόσογος, ἐπεὶ ἔμοιγ' ἔξαρχεῖ  
ὃς ἂν μὴ κακὸς ἦ] μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰ-  
δώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,  
ὕγιῃς ἀνὴρ· οὐ τμὴν† ἐγὼ  
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων  
ἀπείρων γενέθλα.  
πάντα τοι καλὰ, τοῖσιν  
τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται

DL Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Cambridge University Press, 1962

Such a reconstruction introduces the question of exegesis of not only texts but of such elements as grammar and how the personal revealing that is the wordless-knowing of empathy compares to the supra-personal wordful revealing that

can be or has been deduced from written texts, spoken words or methods such as Plato's ἔλεγχος.

[11] Socrates, in Protagoras, does not associate ἀληθής with ἀγαθός but with χαλεπός, which again introduces the question as to whether ἔλεγχος is a guide to the revealing that is ἀλήθεια and thus to understanding our φύσις as human beings.

[12] In respect of αἵτιος, here the term 'sources' is apt since 'cause' can impose a particular interpretation on the text, as in the causality of 'cause and effect'.

In respect of σοφία, the Latin sapientia is apposite, as in my translation of Tractates I and XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [*Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369] because in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in Tractates I and XIII sapientia requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation.

[13] Regarding my translation:

i) ἐπιστήμη: epistēmê - implying skill or experience, especially in a profession or type of work or in using a methodology - rather than 'science' or 'knowledge', since 'science' has too many modern connotations while 'knowledge' is somewhat vague. In respect of experience in general, qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 1115: τῇ δ' ἐπιστήμῃ σύ μου προύχοις τάχ' ἄν που, "about this, your experience has the advantage over mine".

ii) αἰοιδός: songsters, not poets, qv. Hesiod, Theogony, 95 where it is associated with the Muses and Apollo:

ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος  
95 ἄνδρες αἰοδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί,

iii) [epistēmê] is implied from the previous ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἄξιον μὴ οὐ ζητεῖν τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστήμην.

iv) Honourable is an accepted translation of τίμιος, with the English word honour dating from around 1200 and derived from the Latin honorem (refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. An early use of the term occurs in a poem in Middle English by John Gower dating from c. 1393 which references the Greek warrior Achilles:

And riht in such a maner wise  
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,  
So that Achilles underfongeth  
As to a yong ladi belongeth  
Honour, servise and reverence.

Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 (The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901, edited by G.C Macaulay)

[14] Tractate I, 15-16. From my commentary on that tractate:

*jumelle*. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here [...]

*deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal*. Θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

*wyrd*. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

[...]

*a mysterium esoteric.* For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term *mysterium* - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word *mystery* by itself does not). Likewise in respect of *esoteric* - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the *mysterium* in question is.

Hence why I write *a mysterium* here rather than *the mysterium*, and why "a *mysterium*, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the mystery kept hidden until this very day"

[15] Tractate XI, 3-7

[16] In respect of *eikon*, as I wrote in my commentary on Tractate I (Pœmandres), 32:

The meaning and significance of [εἰκὼν] are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as *eikons*, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the *eikon* of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all *physis* - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an *eikon* of) *theos*. That is, the *physis* of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of *theos* but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize *theos*, to be in communion with *theos*, to return to *theos*, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (*anados*) through the seven spheres."

[17] The masculous and the muliebral are outlined in my 2019 essay *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/collected-works-2/physis-and-being/>.

[18] The unusual English word *geniture* expresses the essence of γένεσις: that which or those whom have or derive their being (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. It also avoids comparisons with the Biblical use of the English 'genesis'.

[19] Tractate I, 18-19.

---

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2022  
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt

---



---

**Corpus Hermeticum**

**Eight Tractates**

**I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII**

**Translation and Commentary**

**David Myatt**

## Contents

Preface

**Tractate I.** Ποιμάνδρης. Poemandres

**Tractate III.** Ιερός Λόγος. An Esoteric Mythos

**Tractate IV.** Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς. From Hermes To Thoth: Chaldron Or Monas

**Tractate VI.** Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else

**Tractate VIII.** Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν. That no beings are lost, despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

**Tractate XI.** Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν. From Perceiverance To Hermes

**Tractate XII.** Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivration.

**Tractate XIII.** Ἑρμοῦ τοῦ τρισμεγίστου πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Τάτ ἐν ὄρει λόγος ἀπόκρυφος περὶ παλιγγενεσίας καὶ σιγῆς ἐπαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence

Bibliography

---

## Preface

This work collects together my translations of and commentaries on the eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum which were published separately between 2013 and 2017. From the fourteen Greek tractates that have been traditionally referred to as the Corpus Hermeticum, I chose the eight (the ogdoad) whose texts I considered were the most metaphysical and mystical and thus which can provide an understanding of what came to be termed hermeticism.

In the case of the Corpus Hermeticum, the task of translating ancient Greek into English is complicated by the terminology used in the text. Words such as λόγος, νοῦς, πνεῦμα, δημιουργόν, φῶς, ψυχή (καὶ τὰ λοιπά), all require careful consideration if the text is to be understood in relation to the cultural milieu existing at the time of its composition; a milieu where a Hellenistic paganism, of various types and hues, thrived alongside the still relatively new religion of Christianity.

All too often, such Greek words are translated by an English word which has, over centuries, acquired a meaning which is not or which may not be relevant to that milieu, resulting in a 'retrospective reinterpretation' of the text. One thinks here of (i) θεός translated as god or as God, and of λόγος translated as 'word' (or Word) which thus suffuse, or can suffuse, the text with the meanings that nearly two thousand years of Christian exegesis have ascribed to those terms; of (ii) νοῦς translated as either "intellect" or as "mind", neither of which is satisfactory especially given what both of those English words have come to denote, philosophically and otherwise, in the centuries since the Greek tractates were written. In an effort to avoid such retrospective reinterpretation here, and the preconceptions thus imposed upon the text, I have sometimes used transliterations, sometimes used a relatively obscure English word, and sometimes used a new term.

However, given that the goal of the translator is to provide for the general reader an intelligible interpretation of the text, to utilize transliterations for every problematic word would fail to accomplish that goal. Which is why the translator has to use their judgement and why every translation is 'a fallible interpretation of meaning'.

The methodology of using some transliterations, some relatively obscure

English words, and some new term or expression (such as noetic sapientia) results in a certain technical - an 'esoteric' - vocabulary which requires or may require contextual, usually metaphysical, interpretation. Often, the interpretation is provided by reference to the matters discussed in the particular tractate; sometimes by reference to other tractates; and sometimes by considering Ancient Greek, and Greco-Roman, philosophy and mysticism. Occasionally, however, the interpretation is to leave some transliteration - such as physis, φύσις - as a basic term of the particular hermetic weltanschauung described in a particular tractate and, as such, as a term which has no satisfactory English equivalent, metaphysical or otherwise, and therefore to assimilate it into the English language. All of which make these translations rather different from other English versions, past and present, with these translations hopefully enabling the reader to approach and to appreciate the hermetic texts sans preconceptions, modern and otherwise, and thus provide an intimation of how such texts might have been understood by those who read them, or heard them read, in the milieu of their composition.

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully enable the reader without a knowledge of Greek (and of the minutiae of over a century of scholarly analysis of the Greek text) to appreciate the texts anew and understand why they have - in the original Greek - been regarded as important documents in respect of particular, ancient, weltanschauungen that have, over the centuries, proved most influential and which can still be of interest to those interested in certain metaphysical speculations and certain esoteric matters.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? Because current, and past interpretations - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - make them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions. Also, because I incline toward the view that such texts, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, are more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἀρρενόθηλυς (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1].

In respect, for example, of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical

Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility /honesty, τὸ ἀγαθόν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals, and which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, including the ethos of Greco-Roman mysticism, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well have expressed. [2]

In respect of the texts, I incline toward the view that they generally represent the personal weltanschauung of their authors germane to their time. That is, that rather than being representative of some axiomatical pre-existing philosophy or of some religious school of thought, they reproduce the insight and the understanding of individuals regarding particular metaphysical matters; an insight and an understanding no doubt somewhat redolent of, and influenced by, and sometimes perhaps paraphrasing, some such existing philosophies and/or some such schools of thought; and an insight which often differs from tractate to tractate.

Regarding my translation, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - in relation to Plato, quite apposite:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ σημαυνομένου χρῆται.

For I have sometimes translated the same Greek word in two different ways in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text [exempli gratia: ἀπερίοριστον, as undefinable and unmeasurable] just as I have idiosyncratically translated certain Greek words [exempli gratia: ἅγιος, as numinous], differences and idiosyncrasies I have endeavoured to explain in my commentary.

The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus*

*Hermeticum*, Third Edition, 1972. Occasionally I have followed the reading of the MSS or the emendations of others rather than Nock's text with such variations noted in my commentary. Text enclosed in angled brackets < > indicates a conjectural editorial addition, and <...> indicates a lacuna.

David Myatt  
2017

[1] a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

[2] I have endeavoured to explain such interpretations in various essays, including (i) *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, (ii) *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*; and (iii) *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

---

Ποιμάνδρης

Pœmandres

Tractate I

## Introduction

The Greek text of the tractate often referred to as the Pœmandres/Pymander part of the Corpus Hermeticum was first published by Turnebus in Paris in 1554 and of the origin of the knowledge expounded in the text, the author declares at v.2 that

εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς οἶδα ὃ βούλει καὶ σύνειμί σοι  
πανταχοῦ

Which implies - qv. my translation, and notes and commentary on the text - that what Pœmandres is about to reveal is an authentic perceivration, and this supernatural being [or archetype] knows what is desired/wanted because, like the guardian daemons of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is close by.

What is revealed is a summary of that weltanschauung that has been termed hermetic philosophy; a summary widely regarded as an important hermetic text and as dating from the second or the third century CE; and a summary which contains many interesting notions and allusions, such as logos, physis/Physis, the septenary system, the gospel of John, the feminine character of Physis/Nature, the doxology Agios o Theos, and θεός as being both male and female in one person - that is, either *ἀνδρόγυνος* or (more controversially) bisexual.

ooo

## Translation

[1] Once, while concentrating on and pondering what is real, my intuitions freely flowed, and, my alertness dulled as from an excess of wearisome bodily toil or too much eating, it seemed as if a huge being - too large to measure -

chanced by calling out my name and asking what it was I wanted to see and hear about and learn and have knowledge of.

[2] Who are you, I asked.

I am Pœmandres, the perceivration of authority, knowing your desires and eachwhere with you.

[3] I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos. That is what I want to hear.

So he said to me, remember all those things you wanted to learn, for I shall instruct you.

[4] So saying, his form altered whereupon I at once sensed everything; an indefinity of inner sight, with everything suffused in phaos - bright and clear - so that from this seeing, a desire. But all too soon there came down upon it a heavy darkness - stygian, strange - and slithering <as a serpent> until that darkness changed in physis: flowing, of an untellable disorder, with smoke as from a fire and an indescribable sound followed by some aphonous noise as if phaos was calling out.

[5] And then, from the phaos, a numinous logos came upon that physis with pure Fire going forth to the height of that physis; easily and effective and efficient. Since Air is agile, it followed the pneuma, up and above Earth and Water and as far as Fire, to be as if it were hanging from that, there.

Earth and Water remained, coagulating together such that <Earth> could not be seen apart from Water until they were stirred by the sound of the pneumal logos that came down upon them.

[6] Pœmandres asked, had I apprehended the sense of that inner seeing? And I said I shall have knowledge of it.

I am, he said, that phaos; perceivration, your theos, and prior to the flowing physis brought forth from darkness. [And] the phaomal logos, from perceivration, is the child of theos.

So I said for him to continue.

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivration is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life.

Thank you, I said.

Then discover phaos and become familiar with it.



[7] So saying, he stared at me for so long a duration that I shivered because of the way he looked. But, as he tilted his head back, I, observing, discovered the phaos of unmeasurable forces and an undefinable cosmic order coming-into-being. While the fire, embraced by a strong force, was subdued and kept in stasis.

Such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres. But, since I was vexed, he spoke to me again. From your seeing, an awareness of the quidditas of semblance; of the primal before the origin without an end.

This was what Pœmandres said to me, then.

[8] So I asked from what place, then, the parsements of physis?

To which he answered, from the deliberations of theos, who, having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it, and so became a cosmic order from their own parsements and by the birth of Psyche.

[9] Theos, the perceiversion, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceiversion, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

[10] Directly, from the downward parsements, the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceiversion of that artisan, for it was of the same essence. Thus the descending parsements of Physis were left, devoid of logos, to be only substance.

[11] The perceiversion of that artisan, in combination with logos, surrounded the spheres, spinning them around, a twizzling of artisements of some indefinite origin and some undeterminable end, finishing where they began. Turning around and around as perceiversion decreed, the spheres produced, from those descending parsements, beings devoid of logos, for they were not given logos, while Air produced what flew, and Water what swam. Divided, one from the other, were Earth and Water, as perceiversion had decreed, with Earth delivering from within herself beings four-footed and crawling, and animals savage and benign.

[12] Perceiversion, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved. And theos, who loved his own image, bequeathed to him all his works of Art.

[13] Thus, having discovered what that artisan with that father's assistance had wrought, he too determined on such artisements, which the father agreed to. Ingressing to the artisan's realm, with full authority, he appreciated his

brother's artisements, and they - loving him - each shared with him their own function.

Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres to discover the one who imposed their strength upon the Fire.

[14] With full authority over the ordered cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos.

When she beheld such unceasing beauty - he who possessed all the vigour of the viziers and was the image of theos - she lovingly smiled, for it was as if in that Water she had seen the semblance of that mortal's beautiful image and, on Earth, his shadow. And as he himself beheld in that Water her image, so similar to his own, he desired her and wanted to be with her.

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers, they were intimately joined together.

[15] Which is why, distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one. <...>

[16] <...> my perceivation, for I also love the logos. Then Pœmandres said, this is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean.

Pœmandres, I said, a great eagerness has now arrived in me so that I yearn to hear more. Do not go away.

Then, Pœmandres replied, be silent for this primary explanation is not yet complete.

I shall, I said, therefore, be silent.

[17] To continue, those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

[18] Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artisements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

[19] Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death.

[20] But why, I asked, do the unknowing err so much that they are robbed of immortality.

You seem, he said, not to have understood what you heard, for did I not tell you to discover things?

I said I do recall and am discovering, for which I am obliged.

Then tell me, if you have discovered, why death is expected for those in death.

Because originally the body began with that stygian darkness, from whence the flowing physis which formed the body within the perceptible cosmic order which nourishes death.

[21] Your apprehension is correct. Yet why, according to the logos of theos, does the one of self-discovery progress within themselves?

To which I replied, phaos and Life formed the father of all beings, from whence that human came into being.

You express yourself well. For phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being. Therefore if you learn to be of Life and phaos - and that you perchance are of them - then you progress to return to Life. Thus spoke Pøemandres.

Can you - who are my perceiviation - therefore tell me how I may progress to Life? For does not theos say that the human of perceiviation should have self-knowledge?

[22] And do not all humans posses perceiviation?

Again you express yourself well. I, perceivration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

Before they hand over their body to its death they loathe the influencing impressions, for they know their vigour. That is, I - perceivration - do not allow what the vigour of the body embraces to be achieved. For, as guardian, I close the entrance to the bad and the dishonourably vigorous, preventing their procrastinations.

[23] I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness - which tests them - and thus increase that fire even more.

[24] You, perceivration, have instructed me well about all those things I sought. But could you tell me how the Anados will occur?

To which Pœmandres replied, first, the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed with the semblance it had disappearing and its now non-functioning ethos handed over to the daimon, with the body's perceptions returning to their origin, then becoming separated with their purpose, transplanted, and with desire and eagerness journeying toward the physis devoid of logos.

[25] Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

[26] Thus, stripped of the activities of that structure, they enter into the ogdoadic physis, and, with those there, celebrate the father in song for they, together, rejoice at this arrival who, now akin to them, hears those forces beyond the ogdoadic physis celebrating theos in melodious song. Then, in order, they move toward the father to hand themselves over to those forces, and, becoming those forces, they become united with theos. For to so become of theos is the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge.

Why, therefore, hesitate? Should it not be that, having received all these things,

you should become a guide to those who are suitable so that, because of you, descendants of mortals may - through theos - escape?

[27] Having so spoken to me, Pœmandres joined with those forces, while I, having given thanks to and expressed my gratitude toward the father of all beings, went forth strengthened and informed regarding the physis of everything and with an insight of great importance.

So it was that I began to tell mortals about how beautiful knowledge and an awareness of the numinous were. You earth-bound mortals, you who have embraced intoxicating liquor, sleepfulness, and are unknowing of theos: soberize, stop your drunkenness, for you are beguiled by irrational sleepfulness.

[28] Hearing this, they, with the same purpose, gathered round. And I said, you who are earth-bound, why do you embrace death when you have the means to partake of immortality? Change your ways, you who have accompanied deception and who have kinship with the unknowing ones. Leave the dark phaos, partake of immortality, move away from your destruction.

[29] Then some of them, having ridiculed, went away, embracing as they did the way of death; although some others, desirous of being informed, threw themselves down at my feet. I asked them to stand, and thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them.

And with the arrival of evening with the rays of Helios beginning to completely wane, I bid they express their gratitude to theos, after which - with that expression of gratitude completed - they each retired to their own bed.

[30] Commemorating within myself the noble service of Pœmandres - replete with what I had desired - I was most pleased, for the sleep of the body engendered temperance of psyche, the closing of the eyes a genuine insight, with my silence pregnant with the noble, and the expression of the logos breeding nobility.

Such is what transpired for me, received from perceivization - that is, Pœmandres; for it was by being theos-inspired that I came upon this revealing. Therefore, from my psyche and with all my strength, I offer benedictions to theos, the father.

[31]

Agios o Theos, father of all beings.

Agios o Theos, whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts.

Agios o Theos, whose disposition is to be recognized and who is recognized by his own.

Agios es, you who by logos form all being.  
Agios es, you who engender all physis as eikon.  
Agios es, you whom the Physis did not morph.  
Agios es, you who are mightier than all artifice.  
Agios es, you who surpass all excellence.  
Agios es, you who transcend all praise.

You - ineffable, inexpressible, to whom silence gives voice - receive these respectful wordful offerings from a psyche and a heart that reach out to you.

[32] I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in acquiring knowledge germane to our essence; to invigorate me, so that - by that favour - I may bring illumination to the unknowing who, kindred of my kind, are your children.

Such I testify and believe; to advance to Life and phaos. For you, father, a benediction. Your mortal's purpose is to share in your numinosity, for which you have provided every means.

ooo

### Notes and Commentary on the Text

The numbers refer to the sections of the Greek text, 1-32.

#### 1.

*what is real.* Regarding τῶν ὄντων cf. Plato, Republic, Book 7 (532c) - πρὸς δὲ τὰ ἐν ὕδασι φαντάσματα θεῖα καὶ σκιάς τῶν ὄντων ἀλλ' οὐκ εἰδώλων σκιάς δι' ἑτέρου τοιούτου φωτὸς ὡς πρὸς ἥλιον κρίνειν ἀποσκιαζομένους - where the φάντασμα (the appearance) of some-thing natural (god-given), such as the σκιά (image) that is reflected by water, is stated to be real, and contrasted with what is not considered to be real (what is an unsubstantial image) such as that cast by a fire rather than by the Sun.

*intuition.* For διανοίας. As with νοῦς (see 2. below) a term which deserves some scrutiny. Conventionally, it is translated as 'thought', or 'thinking', as if in reference to some sort of idealized faculty we human beings are said to possess and which faculty deals with ideations and their collocations and is considered as necessary to, or the foundation of, understanding and reason.

More accurately, in a classical context, διανοίας is (i) 'intelligence' (or intuition) in the sense of understanding some-thing or someone (i.e. in being able to perceive some-thing correctly or to correctly understand - to know - a person), or (ii) 'intention'.

I have opted for 'intuition' as suggesting, and as manifesting, insight, often from

contemplation, as the etymology, from the Latin *intueri*, suggests. For the English word 'thought' now conveys modern meanings which, in my view, are not relevant here. And an 'intuition' that is related to, but somewhat different from, the perceivment that is νοῦς.

*Alertness.* αἴσθησις. Alertness here in the sense that the normal, alert, awareness of the physical senses is dulled by interior intuition, insight, or revelation. An appropriate alternative translation would thus be *awareness*, as in awareness of one's surroundings.

*Huge.* ὑπερμεγέθη - qv Plutarch *Romulus*, 16.5 ἐπὶ στρατοπέδου δρῶν ἔτεμεν ὑπερμεγέθη - chopped down a huge tree there in that encampment.

Huge, and too large to measure by ordinary means. I do not see any need to exaggerate what is implied, as some other translations do.

*Have knowledge of.* In the tractate, γινῶναι is related to νοῦς and διανοίας as an expression of what is perceived, or one is aware of. Here, of what one discerns in the sense of distinguishing some-thing from something else and thus 'knowing' of and about that thing.

## 2.

*Pœmandres.* Ποιμάνδρης. The older interpretation of 'shepherd of men' is unacceptable because speculative; the speculation being that it derives from ποιμήν, which has a variety of meanings other than shepherd, for example, chief, and owner.

A more recent etymology involves some ancient Egyptian term associated with the god Re. However, this etymology, first proposed by Francis Griffith in the 1920's [qv. W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson: *Hermetica: the ancient Greek and Latin writings which contain religious or philosophical teachings ascribed to Hermes Trismegistus*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936] was based on a linguistic and stylistic analysis of Coptic sources dating well over a millennia after the god Re was worshipped in ancient Egypt.

Also, the book *From Poimandres to Jacob Bohme: Hermetism, Gnosis and the Christian Tradition*, edited by Roelof van den Broek and published in 2000 (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica) which mentions this etymology by Griffiths and which is often cited as confirming this etymology, does not provide further context in the form of extant Egyptian hieroglyphic inscriptions or references to papyrus fragments from long before the Coptic period, but instead makes various conjectures, as for example in respect of an alternative Coptic form of the genitive n-re, and relies on other linguistic/stylistic analysis of much later texts.

Until a link can be established to such primary Egyptian sources, or to reliable

sources much earlier than such Coptic texts, I remain unconvinced in respect of the ancient Egyptian origins of the name Ποιμάνδρης, and therefore am inclined to leave it as a personal name, transliterated Poemandres.

*perceivance*. νοῦς. The conventional interpretation here is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres.

In addition, one should ask what does a translation such as 'I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty' [*vide* Copenhagen] actually mean? That there is a disembodied 'mind' which calls itself Poemandres? That this disembodied 'mind' is also some gargantuan supernatural shapeshifting being possessed of the faculty of human speech? That some-thing called 'sovereignty' has a mind?

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceivance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action. Hence why, in the Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has Creon voice his understanding of the incipient hubris of Oedipus, of his pride without a purpose, of his apparent inability to understand, to correctly perceive, the situation:

εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν αὐθαδίαν  
εἶναί τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,  
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.



Translating νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation thus places it into the correct context, given αὐθεντίας - authority. For "I am Pœmandres, the perceivation of authority" implies "What [knowledge] I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Pœmandres, the authentic perceivation." [ The English word authentic means 'of authority, authoritative' and is derived, via Latin, from the Greek αὐθεντία ]

*eachwhere*. An unusual but expressive (c.15th century) English word, suited to such an esoteric text. The meaning here is that, like a guardian δαίμων of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is always close by: eachwhere with you.

### 3.

*Apprehend*. νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'. Again, I have tried to make a subtle distinction here, as there is in the text between the related νοῦς, γνῶναι, and διανοίας.

*physis*. A transliteration, to suggest something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

γνῶναι τὸν θεόν. To have - to acquire - knowledge of θεός. Does θεός here mean God, a god, a deity, or the god? God, the supreme creator Being, the only real god, the father, as in Christianity? A deity, as in Hellenic and classical paganism? The god, as in an un-named deity - a god - who is above all other deities? Or possibly all of these? And if all, in equal measure, or otherwise?

The discourse of Pœmandres, as recounted in the tractate, suggests two things. First, that all are meant or suggested - for example, Τὸ φῶς ἐκεῖνο, ἔφη, ἐγὼ νοῦς ὁ σὸς θεός could be said of Pœmandres as a god, as a deity, as the god, and also possibly of God, although why God, the Father - as described in the Old and New Testaments - would call Himself Pœmandres, appear in such a vision, and declare what He declares about θεός being both male and female in one person, is interesting. Second, that the knowledge that is revealed is of a source, of a being, that encompasses, and explains, all three, and that it is this knowing of such a source, beyond those three conventional ones, that is the key to 'what is real' and to apprehending 'the physis of beings'.

Hence, it is better to transliterate θεός - or leave it as θεός - than to use god; and a mistake to use God, as some older translations do.

*remember all those things you want to learn.* Ἔχε νῶ: 'hold the awareness' [be aware] of what you said you wanted to learn - that is, 'remember' them; which is better, and more expressive, than the somewhat colloquial and modern 'keep in mind'.

#### 4.

*So saying, his form [ἰδέα] altered.* For τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἠλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ. Or - more expressively - 'he shapeshifted'. A common theme in Greek mythology and literature, as in the ancient Hymn to Demeter:

ὥς εἰποῦσα θεὰ μέγεθος καὶ εἶδος ἄμειψε γῆρας ἀπωσαμένη

Having so spoken, the goddess changed in height and cast off that aged appearance

*[An] indefinity of inner sight [inner seeing].* ὁρᾷ θεᾶν ἀόριστον. The sense of ὁράω here is metaphorical, of an interior knowing or apprehension not occasioned by the faculty of sight; the inner knowing, for example, that the blind Tiresias has in respect of Oedipus in the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles - his apprehension of what Oedipus has done and what he will do. Such an 'inner seeing' includes the Tiresian kind a prophetic knowing as well as the 'interior visions' of a mystic.

In respect of ἀόριστος, I have opted for indefinity, an unusual [read obscure] English word derived c.1600 from indefinite.

*phaos.* A transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος. Since φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which other translations use, and which English word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply; and hopefully thus conveys something about the original text.

Also, φῶς δὲ πάντα γεγεννημένα suggests '[with] everything *suffused in phaos*' and not 'everything *became* light' as if to imply that suddenly everything was transformed into 'light'.

*clear and bright.* εὐδιόν τε καὶ ἱλαρόν - if one accepts the emendation εὐδιόν [clear] then ἱλαρόν might suggest the metaphorical sense of 'bright' (rather

than the descriptive 'cheery') which fits well with the contrasting and following φοβερόν τε καὶ στυγνόν.

*Downward.* κατωφερές - cf. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, Book 4, chapter 13 - κατωφερές δ' ἐστὶ τὸ πεδίον.

*stygian.* For στυγνόν, for stygian is a word which in English imputes the sense of the original Greek, as both its common usage, and its literary usage (by Milton, Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson, et al) testify. Some-thing dark, gloomy, disliked, abhorred. One might, for example, write that "that river looks as stygian", and as unforgiving, as the water of Styx - ἀμείλικτον Στυγὸς ὕδωρ.

*serpent.* ὄφει is one of the emendations of Nock, for the meaning of the text here is difficult to discern. Given what follows - re the smoke and fire - it is tempting to agree with Reitzenstein that what may be meant is a not an ordinary serpent but a dragon, δράκοντι, qv. the Iliad (II, 308) and the seven-headed dragon of Revelation 12, 3-17.

*flowing* (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here, since what follows - ἀφάτως τεταραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδιδοῦσαν - does not suggest either 'watery' or 'moist'. Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποιοῦν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὀρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

*aphonous ... phaos calling out.* I follow the MSS which have φωτὸς, which Nock emended to πυρός. While the emendation, given the foregoing mention of fire, makes some sense, it does render what follows, with the mention of φωτὸς, rather disjointed. However, if - as I suggested above - φῶς is not translated as 'light', but, as with physis and λόγος [qv. 5. below], is transliterated, then φωτὸς here is fine, for it is as if "phaos was calling out" in an aphonous - an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless - way from beneath the covering of darkness that has descended down, and descended with an indescribable noise. And aphonous here because covered - smothered, obscured, muffled - by the indescribably noisy darkness. Which leads directly to the mention of φῶς and λόγος in the next part of the text; that is, to the ascension of φῶς and λόγος.

If one reads πυρός, then the interpretation would be that it is the fire which is calling out in an un-human, animal-like, and thus wordless way.

## 5.

*Logos.* λόγος. A transliteration, which as with my other transliterations, requires the reader to pause and reflect upon what the term may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. The common translation as 'Word' does not express or even suggest all the meanings (possible or suggested) of the Greek, especially as Word - as in Word of God - now imputes so much (in so many different often

doctrinal ways) after two thousand years of Christianity and thus tends to lead to a retrospective re-interpretation of the text.

*Numinous.* ἅγιος. Numinous is better - more accurate - than 'holy' or 'sacred', since these latter English words have been much overused in connexion with Christianity and are redolent with meanings supplied from over a thousand years of exegesis; meanings which may or may not be relevant here.

Correctly understood, numinous is the unity beyond our perception of its two apparent aspects; aspects expressed by the Greek usage of ἅγιος which could be understood in a good (light) way as 'sacred', revered, of astonishing beauty; and in a bad (dark) way as redolent of the gods/wyrd/the fates/morai in these sense of the retributive or (more often) their balancing power/powers and thus giving rise to mortal 'awe' since such a restoration of the natural balance often involved or required the death (and sometimes the 'sacrifice') of mortals. It is the numinous - in its apparent duality, and as a manifestation of a restoration of the natural, divine, balance - which is evident in much of Greek tragedy, from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (and the *Orestia* in general) to the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles.

The two apparent aspects of the numinous are wonderfully expressed by Rilke:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel  
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme  
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem  
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts  
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,  
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,  
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich.

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?  
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve  
Into his very existence.  
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen  
Which we can only just survive  
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.  
Every angel is numinous

*wenn ich schrie.* 'Were I to sigh aloud' is far more poetically expressive, and more in tune with the metaphysical tone of the poem and the stress on *schrie*, than the simple, bland, 'if I cried out'. A sighing aloud - not a shout or a scream - of the sometimes involuntary kind sometimes experienced by those engaged in contemplative prayer or in deep, personal, metaphysical musings.

*der Engel Ordnungen.* The poetic emphasis is on Engel, and the usual translation here of 'orders' - or something equally abstract and harsh (such as hierarchies) - does not in my view express the poetic beauty

(and the almost supernatural sense of strangeness) of the original; hence my suggestion 'angelic beings' - of such a species of beings, so different from we mortals, who by virtue of their numinosity have the ability to both awe us and overpower us.

*came upon that physis.* Came upon that which had the physis of darkness and then changed to become fluidic.

*Fire.* A capitalization, since 'fire' here is suggestive of something possibly elemental.

*Air.* A capitalization, as with Fire; ditto with the following Water and Earth.

A possible alternative here might be to use the Homeric meaning of ἀήρ - mist - since 'air' is just too general, does not describe what is happening, and thus is confusing.

*pnuema.* For πνεύματι/πνεῦμα. A transliteration, given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text.

This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

*coagulating.* For συμμεμιγμένα, which suggests something more elemental - more actively joined - than just 'mixed or mingled' together.

*pneumal logos.* πνευματικὸν λόγον. The term *pneumal logos* is interesting and intended to be suggestive and thus open to and requiring interpretation. In contrast, the usual translation is verbo spirituali (spiritual word), as if what is meant or implied is some-thing theological and clearly distinct from the corporeal, as Thomas Aquinas wrote in *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate*: Ex quo patet quod nomen verbi magis proprie dicitur de verbo spirituali quam de

corporali. Sed omne illud quod magis proprie invenitur in spiritualibus quam in corporalibus, propriissime Deo competit. Ergo verbum propriissime in Deo dicitur. (*De veritate*, q. 4a. 1s. c2).

6.

*apprehended the sense of that inner seeing.* Given what follows, the English word 'sense' is perhaps appropriate here, rather than the inflexible word 'meaning'.

*phaomal logos.* φωτεινὸς λόγος. As with *pneumal logos*, this is suggestive, and open to interpretation.

*child of theos.* υἱὸς θεοῦ. The scriptural sense - 'son of god', for example Mark 15.39, Ἀληθῶς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος υἱὸς θεοῦ ἦν - is usually assumed; a sense which follows the general usage of υἱὸς (son) as in Homer et al. But the later (c.2nd/3rd century CE) usage 'child' is possible here, a usage known from some papyri (qv. *Papiri Greci e Latini*, edited by Girolamo Vitelli). This also has the advantage of being gender neutral, for which see the note under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

*logos kyrios.* λόγος κυρίου (cf. *pneumal logos* and *phaomal logos*). Invariably translated as 'word of the lord', echoing the formula found in LXX (qv. for example Jeremiah 1.4 ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς με) although, as attested by many papyri, kyrios was also used in the Hellenic world as an epithet both of a deity and of a powerful potentate [hence 'logos kyrios' rather than 'kyrios logos'] implying respect and an acknowledgement of their authority and power.

7.

*duration.* For reasons I outlined in the *The Art of Translation, and A Question About Time* section of Appendix I, I prefer to translate χρόνος as duration (or something akin) and not as 'time'. Briefly explained, the English word 'time' now denotes what the term χρόνος did not.

*tilted his head back.* Perhaps suggestive of looking up toward the heavens, qv. the c. 2nd century CE writer Achilles Tatius (writing around the time the *Corpus Hermeticum* was written) who, in *Leucippe and Clitophon*, Book V, 3.3, wrote - ἀνανεύσας εἰς οὐρανὸν ὧ Ζεῦ, τί τοῦτο ἔφην φαίνεις ἡμῖν τέρας

*unmeasurable.* ἀπερίοριστον - beyond being countable, impossible to be counted; from ἀριθμητός - countable.

*cosmic order.* κόσμος. The word 'cosmos' by itself is probably insufficient here, for the Greek term κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure, an order evident in the observed regularity of heavenly bodies such as the moon, the constellations, and the planets.

*undefinable*. ἀπεριόριστον: A slightly different sense here to previously, and an interesting contrast with εὐπεριόριστον - well-defined - as used by Strabo when describing the process of measuring and defining, in geographical terms, a region of the Earth:

τὸ γὰρ σημειῶδες καὶ τὸ εὐπεριόριστον ἐκεῖθεν λαβεῖν ἔστιν, οὗ  
χρεῖαν ἔχει ὁ γεωγράφος: εὐπεριόριστον δέ, ὅταν ἢ ποταμοῖς ἢ ὄρεσιν  
ἢ θαλάττῃ δυνατὸν ᾖ (Geography, 2.1.30)

*coming-into-being*. γεγεννημένον. The meaning here is somewhat obscure. Is what is described a discovery of how the already existing and known cosmic order *came* into being, or the apprehension of a - or some sort of - cosmic order coming-into-being? Or does γεγεννημένον refer to phaos?

## 8.

*quidditas of semblance*. ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος. The transliteration 'archetype' here is, unfortunately, unsuitable, given what the term archetype now suggests and implies (vide Jungian psychology, for example) beyond what the Greek of the text means. Appropriate words or terms such as 'primal-pattern' or 'protoform' are awkward, clumsy. Hence quidditas (11th/12th century Latin), from whence came 'quiddity', a term originally from medieval scholasticism which was then used to mean the natural (primal) nature or form of some-thing, and thus hints at the original sense of ἀρχέτυπον. As used here, quidditas means exactly what ἀρχέτυπον does in the text, sans Jungian psychology; sans modern 'popular psychology'; sans expositions of hermetic/gnostic philosophy (or what is assumed to be a hermetic/gnostic philosophy) and sans expositions of Plato's philosophy.

The whole passage - τὸ ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος, τὸ προάρχον τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆς ἀπεράντου - is concerned with various shades of ἀρχή, and is rather obscure. ἀρχή as the origin - 'the beginning' - of beings and thus of their εἶδος (the ἀρχέτυπον), of their semblance, their type; and ἀρχή - the primal before (προάρχον) that beginning, of beings - as that origin (that beginning) which has no end, no known limits, ἀπεράντου.

*parsements*. For στοιχεῖον, and thus avoiding the word 'elements' whose meanings, being now many and varied, somewhat detract from the meaning of the text. By a parsement - an unusual variant of partiment (from the Latin partimentum) - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) components or principles of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times; and whether or not these are undescribed or described in terms of a particular philosophy or weltanschauung (for example, as Air, Fire, and so on).

*deliberations of theos*. βουλῆς θεοῦ. 'Deliberations' is the sense here; as in theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - having pondered upon, or considered, a

particular matter or many matters. cf. Herodotus [Histories, 9.10] - ὁ μὲν σφί ταῦτα συνεβούλευε: οἱ δὲ φρενὶ λαβόντες τὸν λόγον αὐτίκα - where a similar following expression (λαβόντες τὸν λόγον) occurs.

Translations such as 'will/decreed of god' are, in my view, far too presumptive.

ἥτις λαβοῦσα τὸν λόγον. This is suggestive of theos having fully comprehended - completely understood - logos [qv. the passage from Herodotus, where the result of the deliberations was understood, approved of: 'taken to heart'], rather than of God 'taking in the Word' or 'receiving the Word'. A 'taking in' from whence to where? A 'receiving' from where?

*re-presented*. In the sense of a divine mimesis - *μίμησις* - which is the Greek word used here, and which mimesis is a important theme in ancient pagan culture, from Art to religion. It is tempting therefore to consider the suggestion that this mimesis by theos is akin to a masterful, a sublime, work of Art.

*Psyche*. For ψυχή, and leaving untranslated so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being - is therefore open to debate, although I have used a capital P to intimate that it is, in the text, an important, and primal, principle, and might imply here the original sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' [or being] which [or who] animates beings making them 'alive'.

## 9.

*male-and-female*. ἀρρενόθηλυσ. The theos - or deity/divinity/God - is both male and female, which can be interpreted as implying a bisexual nature, or androgyny, or hermaphroditism, or a being with the unique ability to both give birth and inseminate, or a being beyond all such mortal (causal) categories and assumptions.

*whose logos brought forth another perceiviation*. ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν. An interesting phrase, possibly open to interpretation, for it might suggest 'whose utterance [who by speaking] brought forth...'

Consider, for example, Psalms 33.6:

τῷ λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστερεώθησαν καὶ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ  
στόματος αὐτοῦ πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις αὐτῶν

בְּדִבְרֵי יְהוָה שָׁמַיִם נִעְשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ יְהוָה פָּאִי כָּל־צָבָאִי

with the Greek of LXX, literally translated, meaning "By the logos of the master [κύριος] the heavens were established and, by the pneuma from his mouth, all



their influence" [δύναμις], with the Hebrew stating it is יהוה [Yhvh - Jehovah] who has established שמים [shamayim, the heavens] and His רוח [ruach, pneuma] their power.

Hence, Pœmandres might well be saying that is was by speaking, by the act of uttering or declaiming a logos, that this theos - whomsoever or whatever theos is - brought forth a[nother] perceiv[er]ation; that is, another way or means of apprehending - of knowing, understanding, and appreciating - the cosmic order.

*artisan*. δημιουργόν. It is tempting to transliterate - as demiourgos - so as not to impose a meaning on the text. Does the word here imply - as possibly with Fire, pneuma, etcetera - an assumed elemental force of principle? Or a demiurge who is a (or the) theos of Fire and pneuma? Or does it imply some creator, the Theos of Fire and Pnuema? Or is some sort of artisan meant? And is this an artisan who, possibly by memesis, can create/manufacture a sublime work of Art that at the very least enables us to perceive the cosmic order - the world - in a new way and who, being a theos, can also possibly create, perhaps as a work of Art, a new cosmic order?

However, I incline toward the view, given what follows - ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά [see below, *fashioned seven viziers*] - that what is meant here is artisan, rather than demiurge.

*fashioned seven viziers*. ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινάς ἐπτά.

The word ἐδημιούργησε occurs in Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (71) - ὅτι καὶ τὸ ὑπόδειγμα ἐν ᾧ ἄφ' οὗ αὐτὸν ἐδημιούργησε] in the section concerned with Plato, where the meaning is what someone (such as a worker or artisan) has wrought, fashioned, or produced.

Viziers captures the meaning of διοικητάς (at the time the text was written) in a way that terms such as controllers, procurators, governors, do not, given the modern senses such terms now have and especially given the context, ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται: that their administration - how these viziers discharge their duties; how they operate given their powers - "is described as fate." That is, is understood, by we mortals, as fate or destiny.

Vizier is a term used in Persia (in its various older forms) and ancient Egypt (a transcription of a hieroglyph), and also later on in the Middle East and North Africa following the rise of Islam, to denote a person who governed or who ruled over - in the name of a higher authority - a particular region or territory or who had a particular sphere of influence; a role similar to the Viceroy of the British Empire.

The seven viziers are the seven classical planetary bodies, named Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Sun, Jupiter, and Saturn, and well-described in ancient

texts, from ancient Persia onwards. Copenhaver [*Hermetica, The Greek Corpus Hermeticum and the Latin Asclepius*, Cambridge University Press, 1992, p.105] refers to some of the scholarly literature regarding these 'seven'.

*spheres*. The context - the cosmic order, and especially the seven planetary viziers who surround or encompass - suggest the meaning of spheres (or orbs) rather than 'circles'. Cf. Sophocles, *Antigone*, 415-6 where κύκλος could suggest sphere, or orb, or circle, but where circle seems apposite:

χρόνον τάδ' ἦν τοσοῦτον, ἔστ' ἐν αἰθέρι μέσω κατέστη λαμπρὸς ἡλίου  
κύκλος καὶ καῦμ' ἔθαλπε

And long this continued until Helios with his radiant circle had established himself in middle-sky, burning us

## 10.

*downward parsements ... logos of theos*. Given that the MSS have στοιχείων τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος the meaning here is conjectural.

'Downward parsements' implies that the fundamental (elemental, primal) components by their nature had a tendency to descend, rather as rain descends down by nature and not because it is 'heavy' [cf. Xenophon, *On Hunting*, 5.3: ἀφανίζει δὲ καὶ ἡ πολλὴ δρόσος καταφέρουσα αὐτά] Hence 'descending parsements' would also be an appropriate translation here.

Regarding θεοῦ λόγος, I have again opted for a transliteration since the common translation here of 'word of God' imposes a particular, Christian, interpretation on the text, (i) given that 'word of god' is most probably what Cyril of Alexandria meant by the phrase, since τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος interestingly occurs in *Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*:

μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ  
πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ  
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τά τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine god from genuine god, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

and (ii) given that this paraphrases the Nicene creed of 325 CE, with the notable exception of μονογενῆς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος instead of τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, the latter conventionally translated as 'only begotten Son of God'.

Thus, were the translation of 'word of god' to be accepted, with the implied meaning from the *Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium*, then Pœmandres is, apparently,

here stating that 'the Word of God' - Jesus of Nazareth, true god from true god, Light from Light, and the only begotten son of God by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being - somehow bounded up to be reunited with the work of the artisan-creator (presumably, in this context, God) who is of the same essence [ὁμοούσιος].

While this is a possible interpretation of the text given that Poemandres uses the same word, in reference to logos, as Cyril of Alexandria - οὐσία (which correctly understood means the very being - the essential nature/physis, or essence - of someone or some-thing) - it does seem somewhat restrictive, considering (i) the many possible meanings, and shades of meaning, of both λόγος and θεός (before and after the advent of Christianity and especially in the context of pagan, Hellenic, weltanschauungen) and (ii) how theos is described by Poemandres (for example, as being both male and female).

*fine artisements of Physis.* Fine - καθάρως; clean and free of defects. Artisement - the product of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship (cf. the 16th century English verb artize) and which artisements include beings of various kinds (including living and/or 'archetypal' ones).

It thus becomes clear, especially given what follows, why transliterating φύσις is better than translating it always as 'nature', as if φύσις here implied what we now, after hundreds years of scientific observation and theories such as that of Darwin, understand as 'the natural world', as a 'nature' that we are or can be or should be masters of and can and do and should control, and which we can (or believe we can) understand.

Physis is capitalized here, as in section 14, to suggest the objectification that the text here implies; and objectified as possibly a being - whomsoever or whatever such a being is - or possibly as some apprehension/emanation of theos (whomsoever or whatever theos is), or some fundamental principle, or some form such as what we now understand as an archetype. This Physis, therefore, might or might not be Nature (as Nature was understood in Hellenic times) although, given what follows about Earth delivering (from her womb) living beings [ ἡ γῆ ἐξήνεγκεν ἀπ' αὐτῆς ἃ εἶχε ζῶα... ] it might be that it is not Nature but something else, for example what may have been understood as the genesis of what we now denote by Nature.

It is interesting that here it is "the descending parsements of physis" (not Physis) who were "left, devoid of logos" while in section 14 it is Physis that is, by implication, described as 'devoid of logos' - ὥκησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν. This is often understood in the pejorative sense, as if this Physis, and the living beings devoid of logos - ζῶα ἥνεγκεν ἄλογα - in section 11, are somehow [to quote one translation] 'unreasoning' beings (or forms) - lacking in reason - and thus somehow [to quote another translation] 'irrational' compared to (and by extension somewhat inferior to) the 'son of theos', which mistaken and unnecessary value-judgements arise from interpreting and translating λόγος as

'Word' or as meaning/implying 'reason'. However, logos is just logos, and devoid of (without) logos - ἄλογος - could be, depending on how logos is interpreted, akin to ἀθάνατος said in respect, for example, of theos [Θεὸν δ' εἶναι ζῶον ἀθάνατον] or implying 'cannot be reduced to something else' and thus heterogeneous [αἱ δὲ ταύτη ἀσύμμετροι ἄλογοι καλείσθωσαν], or lacking the faculty of human speech (as in animals, who are not all 'brutish') or (more esoterically) suggestive of *sans denotatum*, of not denoting things or beings by assigning names or terms to them and thus not distinguishing them or marking them as separate from the whole, the unity, of which one type of wholeness is Physis understood as the goddess of Nature, as the creative force that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth.

*Substance.* ὕλη. Since the Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (qv. the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence 'substance' - the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence.

11.

*the perceivization of that artisan.* As previously, and like physis, both νοῦς and λόγος are here objectified.

*spinning them around.* δυνῶν ροίζω.

12.

*brought forth...a mortal.* ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον. The word ἀπεκύησεν in relation to πατήρ perhaps refers back to where theos, the perceivization, is described as being both male and female [ἀρρενόθηλος] although whether the meaning here is the literal 'gave birth' or the descriptive 'brought forth' is interesting, especially a different word, ἐξήνεγκεν [which the English word delivered - in the sense of giving birth, of 'a woman having disburdened herself of a foetus' - usefully describes] is used in reference to the (female) Earth. This different usage, and the Epistle of James, written not long before the Pœmandres tractate where 'brought forth' is apposite [v.1.15 ἡ δὲ ἀμαρτία ἀποτελεσθεῖσα ἀποκύει θάνατον] incline me toward 'brought forth' here.

In respect of ἄνθρωπος (often emended to ἄνθρωπος) the sense here, as often, is the gender neutral 'human being' - a mortal - and not 'a man'.

*image.* μορφή. Image in both senses of the English term - as outward physical appearance, and as the impression (or concept) that others may have of, or see in, a person.

Image plays an important part in what follows; the image that the son of theos

has of himself and sees reflected back to him and which image he loves. The image Physis has of him and sees a reflection of, and the image which he has of her and which makes him desire her.

*bequeathed to him all his works of Art.* παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. This is a very interesting phrase; theos as artisan, as artist, whose works - whose creations, whose artisements, whose divine re-presentations (μίμησις) - apparently include both the cosmic order, the artisan mentioned previously, and we mortals. Less suggestive of the meaning is 'bequeathed to him all his (various) artisements'.

### 13.

*that father.* Reading πατρί, with the MSS, and not the emendation παρί.

*Ingressing to the artisan's realm.* γενόμενος ἐν τῇ δημιουργικῇ σφαίρᾳ. The realm of the artisan: where the artisan works, and produces artisements and divine works of art, and where someone - here, the mortal, son of theos - can learn and master that skill and produce his own works. This realm is that of the seven spheres, the seven viziers.

*function.* τάξεως. Cf. Plato, *Laws*, 809d - ἡμερῶν τάξεως εἰς μηνῶν περιόδους καὶ μηνῶν εἰς ἕκαστον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἵνα ὥραι καὶ θυσίαι καὶ ἑορταὶ τὰ προσήκοντ' ἀπολαμβάνουσαι ἑαυταῖς ἕκασται τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἄγεσθαι - where the sense is of the periodic, the orderly, functioning of things; of days into weeks, weeks into months, and of months into a year; and which functionality enables us to know when to celebrate and undertake the seasonal festivals and feasts.

*limit.* περιφέρεια. Not here the literal Euclidean meaning of circumference [for example, Euclid, *Elements*, Book 13, Proposition 10 - ἐπεὶ ἴση ἐστὶν ἡ ΑΒΓΗ περιφέρεια τῇ ΑΕΔΗ περιφερείᾳ] but rather of the limits, the boundary, set or marked by the seven spheres; a limit that the mortal, son of theos, is "determined to burst out past".

*imposed their strength upon the Fire.* Cf. section 7 - περισχέσθαι τὸ πῦρ δυνάμει μεγίστη (the fire, embraced by a strong force).

### 14.

*burst through the strength of the spheres.* I follow the reading of the MSS, which have ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, amended by Scott and Nock to ἀναρρήξας τὸ κύτος [burst through the container].

*harmonious structure.* Here, ἁρμονία implies the 'structure' of the κόσμος, the

cosmic order [qv. the note on κόσμος in section 7] and which structure is harmonious [qv. ἀρμονίας ἐναρμόνιος in section 15].

*vigour*. ἐνέργεια. The words 'force' and 'energy' bring too many irrelevant modern connotations to the text, and 'vigour' well expresses the meaning of ἐνέργεια here, with the suggestion, as often elsewhere, of 'vigorous activity'.

*When she beheld*. This, as what follows suggests, is Physis, personified. In respect of beholding such beauty, cf. section 8 - *having seen the beauty of the cosmic order*.

*on Earth, his shadow*. τὸ σκίασμα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Cf. Diogenes Laertius [*Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 7.146, Zeno] not especially for the similarity - τὸ τῆς γῆς σκίασμα - but more for the interesting section, preceding this mention of the shadow of the moon on Earth during an eclipse, of how the cosmic order came into being [142] and for the equally interesting following discussion [147] which concerns the attributes and images of theos - the god - who is described as 'the father of all', who has both male and female aspects, and which aspects of the divinity are given their classical pagan names with their areas of authority specified. The interest lies in how the classical gods, and the creation of the cosmic order, and thus Hellenic paganism, were understood and remembered not long after the *Hermetica* was written, and thus how they echo in part some of the metaphysical themes in, and the cosmogony of, the *Pœmandres* tractate.

*Physis grasped [...] intimately joined together*. ἡ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν. The sense of μίγνυμι here is that of a physical union, a sexual joining together - not of some 'philosophical mingling' of 'forms'. Similarly, περιπλέκω is not some ordinary 'embrace' but a sexual twinning (of limbs). Cf. Hesiod, *Theogony*, 375 - Κρίω δ' Εὐρυβίην τέκεν ἐν φιλότῃ μιγεῖσα Ἀστραῖόν.

*jumelle*. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or 'twofold'.

*deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal*. θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative

translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [phaos] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα [Historia Ecclesiastica, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

wyrd. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the Hermetica was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) -

πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

*of a wakeful one* <...> There is some text missing, indicated by <...>, for after ἄϋπνος ἀπὸ ἄϋπνου the MSS have κρατεῖται [mastered/ruled by - cf. 4 Maccabees 2.9 ἢ ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου κρατεῖται διὰ τὸν λογισμὸν]. Although some suggestions have been made as to this missing text (such as "ruled by love and sleep" [ἔρωτος καὶ ὕπνου] - they are purely conjectural.

## 16.

<...> *my perceivervation*. Again, the suggestions for the missing text are purely conjectural.

*a mysterium esoteric*. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term mysterium - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word mystery by itself does not). Likewise in respect of esoteric - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the mysterium in question is.

Hence why I write *a* mysterium here rather than *the* mysterium, and why "a mysterium, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the mystery kept hidden until this very day".

*possessed the physis of the harmonious seven*. The seven viziers. A more literal translation would be 'possessed the physis of the [harmonious] structure of the

seven'. Here, physis could mean 'character' (of a person) or some-thing more archetypal/elemental of which such character or personal characteristics are an outward manifestation.

*seven male-and-female humans.* These seven humans, born from Physis, are thus akin to both theos and the child of theos who also have a male (a masculous) and a female (a muliebral) aspect. That is, although mortal - having been brought forth by and from divinities - these humans are, in their very being, both male and female and thus, in their creation, dissimilar to ordinary mortals, for reasons which Pœmandres goes on to explain.

In addition, these seven mortals have the same or a similar physis as the 'harmonious seven'.

*ætherean.* For μεταρσίους. Ætherean is the metaphorical sense of μεταρσίους here, not 'exalted' or 'sublime' (which imply some sort of human admiration or some sort of religious attitude/apprehension). For the sense is similar to what Dio Chrysostom wrote, in his tract on leadership, about the sons of Boreas, who - semi-divine - have the attributes of their father and who are depicted in and belonging to their natural realm:

ὁποίους τοὺς Βορεάδας ἐνεθυμήθησάν τε καὶ ἔγραψαν οἱ γραφεῖς  
ἐλαφρούς τε καὶ μεταρσίους ταῖς τοῦ πατρὸς αὔραις συνθέοντας  
[Orationes, 4.1]

Ætherean is used in the poetic sense - that is, 'supernal', meaning of the harmonious - the heavenly - cosmic order and also refined: of the essence, οὐσία, and thus not just ὕλη, substance (qv. section 10).

*Primary explanation.* πρῶτον λόγον [cf. Plato, *Republic*, Book 3 [395b] εἰ ἄρα τὸν πρῶτον λόγον διασώσομεν]. An explanation of our origins, as mortals, and thus of the 'first principle' that forms the basis of the 'hermetic weltanschauung'.

17.

*those seven came into being in this way.* It is interesting to compare 'these seven' with 'the 'nine' and the seven spheres (Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Moon) of the Somnium Scipionis described by Cicero:

Novem tibi orbibus vel potius globis conexas sunt omnia, quorum unus est caelestis, extimus, qui reliquos omnes complectitur, summus ipse deus arcens et continens ceteros; in quo sunt infixi illi, qui volvuntur, stellarum cursus sempiterni. Cui subiecti sunt septem, qui versantur retro contrario motu atque caelum. Ex quibus summum globum possidet illa, quam in terris Saturniam nominant. Deinde est hominum



generi prosperus et salutaris ille fulgor, qui dicitur Iovis; tum rutilus horribilisque terris, quem Martium dicitis; deinde subter mediam fere regionem Sol obtinet, dux et princeps et moderator luminum reliquorum, mens mundi et temperatio, tanta magnitudine, ut cuncta sua luce lustret et compleat. Hunc ut comites consequuntur Veneris alter, alter Mercurii cursus, in infimoque orbe Luna radiis solis accensa convertitur. Infra autem iam nihil est nisi mortale et caducum praeter animos munere deorum hominum generi datos; supra Lunam sunt aeterna omnia. Nam ea, quae est media et nona, Tellus, neque movetur et infima est, et in eam feruntur omnia nutu suo pondera. [*De Re Publica*, Book VI, 17]

Nine orbs - more correctly, spheres - connect the whole cosmic order, of which one - beyond the others but enfolding them - is where the uppermost deity dwells, enclosing and containing all. There - embedded - are the constant stars with their sempiternal movement, while below are seven spheres whose cyclicity is different, and one of which is the sphere given the name on Earth of Saturn [...]

*Muliebral*. For θηλυκή. The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and is used here to refer to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities, that are conventionally and historically associated with women. Muliebral is more expressive - and more redolent of the meaning of the Greek - than 'feminine', especially given how the word 'feminine' is so often misused (sometimes in a pejorative way).

It should be noted that the older reading of θηλυκή γὰρ ὁ ἄηρ makes Air - not Earth - the muliebral one.

*Lustful*. For ὀχευτικόν. The sense is similar to ἐπιθυμία as used, for example, in Romans 14.13 - τῆς σαρκὸς πρόνοιαν μὴ ποιῆσθε εἰς ἐπιθυμίας [make no intention regarding the flesh, to gratify its carnal desires]

*From Æther, the pneuma*. ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε. It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal.

*cyclic until its completion*. μέχρι περιόδου τέλους. I follow the reading of the Turnebus MS, taking περίοδος to refer to a posited cyclic - periodic - cosmic order, of Aeons, which periodicity continues until its purpose is achieved/fulfilled/completed.

## 18.

*the connexions between all things*. Compare this unbinding of the cosmic bonds with the 'connexions' that make up the nine spheres in the Somnium Scipionis

[qv. the quotation from Cicero, above].

*bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral.* ἐγένετο τὰ μὲν ἀρρενικὰ ἐν μέρει τὰ δὲ θηλυκὰ ὁμοίως. The meaning of ἀρρενικὰ and θηλυκὰ are not 'male' and 'female' but rather masculous (masculine) and muliebral (of or considered appropriate to women).

*propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning.* The same Greek words - αὐξάνεσθε and πληθύνεσθε - occur in LXX, Genesis 1.22: ἡὺλόγησεν αὐτὰ ὁ θεὸς λέγων αὐξάνεσθε καὶ πληθύνεσθε ["Theos praised them, saying: propagate and spawn"; Tyndale - "God blessed them saying, grow and multiply"; KJV - "God blessed them saying, Be fruitful and multiply"].

*creations and artisements.* κτίσματα καὶ δημιουργήματα. Although κτίσμα is generally translated here as 'creature' (as also for example in most translations of Revelation 5.13) I incline toward the view, given the context, that the more general sense of a 'creation' (or 'created thing') is meant - cf. Strabo, Geography, Book 16. 1 [ἥς ἐστὶ κτίσμα ἢ Βαβυλῶν] where what is described is a construct, a creation - a work constructed by or on behalf of someone. Here, what is described are the creations of theos.

In respect of 'artisements', see section 10.

*the perceiver.* ὁ ἔννοους.

*Eros as responsible for death.* τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα. The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from *Daphnis and Chloe*, written by Longus around the same time as the *Corpus Hermeticum*: πάντως γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ᾗ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

Eros - as some-thing similar to an archetypal principle, applicable to or of (existing in/part of) "all beings/creations/things" - might also go some way toward explaining the καὶ πάντα τὰ ὄντα that follows in the text (for example in the Turnebus MS) for which various emendations have been proposed,

including omitting it altogether.

## 19.

*foreknowing, through wyrd.....coagulations.* The foreknowing of theos, which enabled theos through wyrd and the cosmic structure to 'found the generations'. The coagulations, the copulation, of beings (created things).

*self-knowledge.* ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν. A pedantic aside: here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". In addition, it should be noted that the grammatical categorization of a word (male, female, gender neutral) is only a grammatical categorization and does not always reflect the nature of the being that that word denotes or refers to.

*a particular benefit.* τὸ περιούσιον ἀγαθόν. Literally, 'the particular benefit' [an alternative, possibly better, translation would be 'the esoteric benefit']. What the text refers to is not some abstract 'good' but rather what is good for, what benefits, the person. Thus, self-knowledge can lead to a particular, a specific, benefit.

*perceptively.* αἰσθητῶς - cf. Strabo, *Geography*, Book 3, chapter 5.1, a description of a high tide; of the sea, due to the moon, begin to perceptively/visibly both rise and go far onto the shore - ἀρχεσθαι διοιδεῖν τὴν θάλατταν καὶ ἐπιβαίνειν τῆς γῆς αἰσθητῶς μέχρι μεσουρανήσεως.

## 20.

*to discover things.* That is, discover/apprehend for yourself, to reveal (dis-cover) the nature of things, and thus fully understand them; qv. section 3 ('apprehend the physis of beings') and section 6 ('then discover phaos and become familiar with it') and section 7 ('such I observed and discovered because of those words of Pœmandres').

*why death is expected for those who are in death.* διὰ τί ἄξιοί εἰσι τοῦ θανάτου οἱ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ ὄντες. Somewhat obscure, given the phrase 'in death' and given that what follows - "because originally..." - does not really offer an explanation of it.

I take the meaning of ἀξιώ here to be 'expect' rather than 'worthy' given (i) what the English phrase 'they are worthy of death' (or 'they deserve death') implies, an implication - a moralizing attitude - that is not justified by either the immediate context or the rest of the text, and (ii) usages such as (a) νῦν παρ'

ὁμῶν τὸ αὐτὸ ἀξιοῦμεν κομίζεσθαι ['we now expect to receive the same from you'; Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book 1, chapter 43] and (b) ὥστε οὐκ οἴκτου οἱ τοιοῦτοι ἀξιοί εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ τιμωρίας ['they are expected to be punished not pitied', Hyperides, *Orations Against Philippides*, 2.12]

*Nourishes*. ἀρδεύεται here is obviously metaphorical, as it literally means "is irrigated/watered" as in Diodorus Siculus when he describes India - τὰ πολλὰ δὲ τῆς χώρας ἀρδεύεται καὶ διὰ τοῦτο διττοὺς ἔχει τοὺς κατ' ἔτος καρπούς ['much of the land is irrigated which is why there are two yields a year'; *Bibliotheca Historica*, Book 2, 35.3]

## 21.

*progress within themselves*. εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ. Literally, 'progress to (or proceed/advance toward) him', with the usual assumption being that it is theos that is meant (hence, 'proceed toward theos'), with the alternative translation, of 'progress to themselves', ignored. However, given the immediate context - of a self-discovery - and given examples such as Mark 7.15 (εἰσπορευόμενον εἰς αὐτὸν, entering *into* him) and given that (insofar as I understand it) the tractate concerns (i) self-knowing, (ii) a 'mysterium' that is esoteric, and (iii) a desire to know and to understand 'the physis of beings', rather than a religious 'progressing toward god' à la Thomas à Kempis, then I am inclined to favour the somewhat radical translation of 'within themselves'.

*the father of all beings*. ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. The word 'all' by itself does not really capture the sense of ὅλων here, which is 'all beings'. The phrase ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων occurs in many other writings, some of which are Christian. For instance in the Τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰουστίνου πρὸς Τρύφωνα Ἰουδαῖον Διάλογος [The Dialogue of Justinus with Trypho, a Jew] where it is said in the context of Christ being crucified, dying, and then being raised again by 'the father of all' for the benefit of all human beings - τὸν ἑαυτοῦ Χριστὸν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἐκ παντὸς γένους ἀνθρώπων ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὰς πάντων κατάρας ἀναδέξασθαι ἐβουλήθη (xcv, 2).

However, interestingly and relevant here, the phrase also occurs in the polemic by Irenaeus against the 'heresy of gnosticism' - the *Adversus Haereses* [ἔλεγχος καὶ ἀνατροπή της ψευδωνύμου γνώσεως] - written not long before the Poemandres tractate:

μεταδοῦναί σοι θέλω τῆς ἐμῆς χάριτος ἐπειδὴ ὁ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων τὸν ἄγγελόν σου διαπαντὸς βλέπει πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ὁ δὲ τόπος τοῦ μεγέθους ἐν ἡμῖν ἐστὶ δι' ἡμᾶς ἐγκαταστήσαι (Book I, Chapter 13, 3)

I desire to pass on to you my Charis because the father of all beings has observed that your angel is constantly before him

These are the words Irenaeus ascribes to a person called Marcus, 'the heretic'; words used by this person skilled in the trickery of sorcery (μαγικῆς κυβείας ἐμπειρότατον) to, apparently, entice men and wealthy women to be his followers. Irenaeus then goes on, in a passage also quoted by Eusebius in his *Historia Ecclesiastica* (4.11.5), to describe some of the rites - the 'disgusting initiation into the mysteries' - of these people, and which rites include a 'mystical marriage' (πνευματικὸν γάμον) as well as a doxology to 'the father and the mother', εἰς ὄνομα ἀγνώστου πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων εἰς ἀλήθειαν μητέρα τῶν πάντων, and which doxology, with its contrast between ὅλων (ascribed to the father) and πάντων (ascribed to the mother) may go some way toward explaining the meaning of ὅλων as used here, in the Pœmandres tractate, given that μητέρα πάντων - as Γαία, Earth Mother - is the subject of, among other things, one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, where She is described as πρέσβιστος, the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ.

Thus, πατρὸς τῶν ὅλων as the father of all beings, and μητέρα τῶν πάντων as the mother of being, of all Life, both mortal and immortal.

## 22.

*respectful deeds*. ὀσίοις. A difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as religious, pious, holy, devout, blessed, sinless, saintly, humble - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism; meanings which, in my view, are not or may not be relevant here, and whose use would distort one's understanding of the text.

The correct meaning is someone who, aware of or sensitive to the difference between the numinous and un-numinous [regarding 'numinous', see the note on ἅγιος in section 5], seeks to avoid, in their behaviour, what might cause them to hubriatically 'overstep the limits' and thus unbalance them, so taking them away from that natural balance and that respect for the numinous, which they personally, by their (or a particular) way of living (personal, religious, spiritual, mystical, or otherwise) seek or desire to cultivate, or which (and importantly) is a natural part of their admirable (and often admired) character. For example:

ἐκεῖνός γε μὴν ὑμνῶν οὐποτ' ἔληγεν ὥς τοὺς θεοὺς οἶοιτο οὐδὲν ἧττον ὀσίοις ἔργοις ἢ ἀγνοῖς ἱεροῖς ἡδεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁπότε εὐτυχοίη οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερεφρόνει ἀλλὰ θεοῖς χάριν ἥδει καὶ θαρρῶν πλείονα ἔθυσεν ἢ ὀκνῶν ἠῤῥχετο εἴθιστο δὲ φοβούμενος μὲν ἱλαρὸς φαίνεσθαι εὐτυχῶν δὲ πρᾶος εἶναι [Xenophon, *Agésilas*, 11.2]

this person, whom I praise, never ceased to believe that the gods delight in respectful deeds just as much as in consecrated temples,

and, when blessed with success, he was never prideful but rather gave thanks to the gods. He also made more offerings to them when he was confident than supplications when he felt hesitant, and, in appearance, it was his habit to be cheerful when doubtful and mild-mannered when successful.

For these reasons, I have translated not as one English word, but as the phrase 'respectful deeds'. See also the note on εὐσεβέω below.

*honourable*. ἀγαθός. The sense is not of being 'good' in some moralistic, sanctimonious, superior, way, but rather of being of noble character, as for example described in the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρίναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [*De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus* 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company

*refined*. καθαροίς. Literally it means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασίλεια (in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic).

Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

*compassionate*. ἐλεήμοσι. Those who undertake merciful, charitable, humane, deeds; qv. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρὰ ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

*aware of the numinous*. εὐσεβοῦσι. As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this

awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds' [qv. ὁσίοις, above].

*soon acquire knowledge of the whole.* εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι. Knowledge of 'the whole picture'; of what has been and is being discussed: perceivization; the cosmic structure; the nature of humans; the seven viziers; and so on. The sense is not "gnosis of all things", which - in its hubris - is incompatible with the immediately proceeding mention of εὐσεβέω and ὁσίοις.

*affectionately gracious toward.* There are two ways of interpreting τὸν πατέρα ἱλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and what follows. (i) As if it is some kind of Christian eulogy by the faithful, with mention of "lovingly propitiating the father" and the "singing of hymns" to him; and (ii) in a rather more religiously neutral way with phrases such as ἱλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς and words such as ὕμνεῦσιν suggesting the more Hellenic "affectionately gracious" and "celebrating in song". I have chosen the latter, as it is, in my view, more in harmony with the rest of the text.

*the influencing impressions.* αἰσθήσεις. What is meant here is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses, but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which influence a person in a way which is disliked because they do or they can affect a person in a manner detrimental to their immortality. That is, not all 'feelings' nor all 'sensations' are meant but only those which impresses upon [cf. Cicero, *Academica*, 2.6, impressum effictumque] a person in a certain way and thus affect that person also in a certain way, as 'impressionable feelings' do:

αὐτὸς δὲ διὰ ποιημάτων φιλοσοφεῖ, καθάπερ Ἡσίοδος τε καὶ  
Ξενοφάνης καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς κριτήριον δὲ τὸν λόγον εἶπε: τάς τε  
αἰσθήσεις μὴ ἀκριβεῖς ὑπάρχειν φησὶ γοῦν [Diogenes Laertius,  
Parmenides, 9.3]

he himself, through the form of verse, presented his knowledge, as did Hesiod, Xenophanes and Empedocles, stating that it was a way of judging what was reasonable since impressionable feelings were not an accurate enough starting point

This is the type of 'impression' - the type of influence - meant by some alchemical texts, for example, in the *Compound of Alchymy*, by Ripley, contained in the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* ['the Body of the Spryte taketh impression' (ix. xi)] and also, some centuries later, by Hume in his *Treatise on Human Nature* ['those perceptions, which enter with most force and violence, we may name impressions' (I. i. 12)]. Cf. also Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a - τοῦ δὲ μήκουσ ὅρος ὁ μὲν πρὸς τοὺς ἀγῶνας καὶ τὴν αἴσθησιν οὐ τῆς τέχνης ἐστίν - where what is meant is the 'impression' made upon an audience, which thus influences them.

*the bad.* The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'.

However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does.

Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναιῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα  
ἦσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἑκπαγλὸν κακόν (vv. 862-3)

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -  
To remain unprotected by family – is a harsh misfortune

When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character; someone whose nature, for examples, inclines them toward doing harm and doing what is generally considered to be wrong.

This sense is still appropriate to Hellenic usage. For example, in respect of Romans 12.17 with its contrast of κακός and κάλος:

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες προνοούμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all humans see is good

Similarly with the synonym σαπρός, as for example in Luke 6.43-5:

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρόν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.



23.

*hubriatic*. ἄσεβέσι; someone lacking in or who is arrogantly disdainful of σέβομαι, of what is regarded as honourable, revered, respected. Someone who is thus 'hubriatic'. It is the opposite of εὐσεβέω, that is, the opposite of someone who is aware of and respectful of the numinous.

*the avenging daemon*. τῷ τιμωρῷ δαίμον.

Τιμωρῷ is an epithet of the god Mars, mentioned by Cassius Dio Cocceianus in his *Historiae Romanae* when he recounts how Caligula, celebrating the murder of someone, sent three daggers to the temple of Mars the Avenger, in Rome, as offerings to the god - ξιφίδια τρία τῷ Ἄρει τῷ Τιμωρῷ ἐς [Book 59, chapter 22 v.7].

Correctly understood, a δαίμων (daemon) is neither a 'demon' nor one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or to watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

*which tests them*. καὶ τοῦτον βασανίζει. The sense here is rather obscure, with some proposed emendations (for example, οὕτως, and τοῦτο for τοῦτον). I take the sense here of βασανίζω to be 'tested', as in being 'put to the test'; a sense in accord with what precedes and with what follows.

24.

*Anados*. ἄνοδος. A transliteration, as the word has specific meanings in ancient Greek 'mystery cults' and in Hellenic 'mysticism', one of which meanings is the ascent, or progress, or journey, of the initiate/individual toward their goal, however that goal/ascent/progress/journey is described and/or understood, and/or represented (symbolically, mythologically, or otherwise). Quite often, the journey - the 'way up' - is described as the one between the living and the dead (the next life) or as one from the chthonic (the underworld) to our mortal world; which journey sometimes involves a symbolic/mythological death and then a rebirth.

*the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed*. ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὑλικοῦ παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν. Literally, 'in the dissolution of the material body it hands over that body to alteration'.

*ethos*. ἦθος. Here, ethos in the personal sense; the 'spirit' - the personality - of an individual: their traits, character, disposition, nature, temperament.

25.

*in the first realm.* The sphere of the Moon, the first of the seven planetary/alchemical/astrological spheres, realms, or emanations - the ἑβδομάς; hebdomad, septenary system - that, in respect of the journey (ἄνοδος) of the mortal toward immortality, form the basis of, are emanations of, the harmonious cosmic structure (qv. sections 9 and 14). On this journey, the mortal passes through each realm - sphere - in turn.

*which grows and which fades.* Cf. Sextus Empiricus - ταύτην δὲ ἤτοι αὐξητικήν ἢ μειωτικήν [Adversus Mathematicos, IX, 393]

*arrogance of command.* Reading ὑπερηφανίαν not προφανίαν.

## 26.

*ogdoadic physis.* ὀγδοατικήν φύσιν. An interesting and important term, often overlooked and often misinterpreted. What is meant is not a realm - ζώνη - or sphere, similar to but 'beyond' the seven realms, but rather 'of what' the mortal has become, is reborn as, at the end of the journey: partaking in and being of 'the ogdoadic physis', and thus sharing the being/existence of those who have, or who have attained, that particular type of being/existence/physis. The existence, that is, of an immortal beyond the seven emanations.

*with the others there, celebrates the father in song.* ὑμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὗσι τὸν πατέρα. Again - qv. section 22 - not 'hymns' in the Christian sense but rather celebrating in song/verse/chant; celebrating the father of this mortal, the parent of all mortals, and ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων, the 'grandfather' of all beings (qv. section 21).

*force.* δύναμις. Cf. section 7. Those forces, those particular powers - or, more precisely, that type (or those types) of being(s) or existence - that are not only beyond the septenary system but beyond the ogdoadic physis of those mortals who have, because of their journey (ἄνοδος) through the septenary system, achieved immortality.

It is therefore easy to understand why some considered there were, or represented their understanding/insight by, 'nine' (seven plus two) fundamental cosmic emanations, or by nine realms or spheres [qv. the quote from Cicero in section 17] - the seven of the hebdomad, plus the one of the 'ogdoadic physis' mentioned here, plus the one (also mentioned here) of what is beyond even this 'ogdoadic physis'. However, as this text describes, there are seven realms or spheres - a seven-fold path to immortality, accessible to living mortals - and then two types of existence (not spheres) beyond these, accessible only after the mortals has journeyed along that path and then, having 'offered up' certain things along the way (their mortal ethos), 'handed over their body to its death'. Ontologically, therefore, the seven might somewhat simplistically be described as partaking of what is 'causal' (of what is mortal) and the two types of

existence beyond the seven as partaking of - as being - 'acausal' (of what is immortal). Thus, Poemandres goes on to say, the former mortal - now immortal - moves on (from this first type of 'acausal existence') to become these forces (beyond the ogdoadic physis) to thus finally 'unite with theos': αὐτοὶ εἰς δυνάμεις ἑαυτοὺς παραδιδόασιν καὶ δυνάμεις γενόμενοι ἐν θεῷ γίνονται.

26.

*become united with theos.* ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Literally, '[they] become in theos', or '[they] enter into theos', although given what follows - θεωθῆναι - what is meant is 'become of/be united with theos', and thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both immortal and 'of theos'.

*become of theos.* θεωθῆναι. This does not mean 'made divine/god', or 'achieve divinity' or 'become god/a god', or deification, but rather, having become immortal, to be (re)united with theos and thus, by such a 'becoming', re-present (become-of) in that new (acausal) existence the numinosity of theos, and which return and re-presentation is the real aim of our mortal lives and the function of λόγος, and of the λόγοι (such as pneumatic logos and the phasical logos). That is, as explained in some of the rather neglected works of Maximus of Constantinople [qv. Migne Patrologiae Graeca, 90 and 91], Θεώσις in the sense of reunited with theos - ultimately because of ἀγάπη - without actually being or becoming 'a divinity' or 'God':

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται  
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ'  
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra*,  
XXII [Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos  
can be in all ways except one, namely that of having the identity of  
His Essence

*the noble goal.* τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος. This might well be taken as an axiom of the 'hermetic' weltanschauung presented in this tractate. In respect of ἀγαθός as honourable/noble, see the note in section 22.

*those who seek to acquire knowledge.* Given the use here of the word γνῶσις, the sense could be interpreted, and has by others been interpreted, to mean 'those who seek to acquire/attain gnosis'.

*other mortals can - through theos - escape.* I take the sense of σώζω here to be 'escape', for the English word 'saved' now imposes, after nearly two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching, various religious preconceptions on the text. Also, the usual translation of 'saved by god' is somewhat at variance with the hermetic/gnostic weltanschauung which suggests a progression -

ἄνοδος - through the realms/spheres in order to attain immortality.

For the 'escape' is from the mortal to the immortal, and therefore to be 'saved', because of theos, so that (qv. section 21) they can "progress to return to Life"

27.

*joined with those forces.* The meaning here is somewhat obscure, although it possibly signifies that Pœmandres leaves the mortal realm and rejoins - returns to - his existence, beyond the hebdomad, where those forces/powers exist.

*an insight of great importance.* μεγίστην θέαν. An important 'insight into' the workings of the cosmos, immortality, and the nature of mortals, rather than 'a vision' or a 'revelation'.

*awareness of the numinous.* See the note on 'aware of the numinous'/εὐσεβέω in section 22.

*earth-bound mortals.* ἄνδρες γηγενεῖς. The literal meaning is 'earth-born mortals', which is rather obscure here, although what is meant is probably not the somewhat pejorative 'primordial/primitive' type [qv. ἔστι ἐν τῇ ἀκροπόλει ταύτῃ Ἐρεχθεὺς τοῦ γηγενέος λεγομένου εἶναι νηός, Herodotus, 8.55; and ἄλλοι δὲ γηγενεῖς καὶ χαλκασπίδας, Strabo, 10.3] nor even the 'earthy/rural' type [qv. μὴ μισήσης ἐπίπονον ἐργασίαν καὶ γεωργίαν ὑπὸ Ὑψίστου ἐκτισμένην, LXX, Sirach 7.15] but rather the contrast, mentioned in section 15, between those 'deathful of body' and the 'deathlessness of the inner mortal'; with a similar contrast occurring in Plato [οὐδὲν γὰρ γηγενὲς Ὀλυμπίων ἐντιμότερον ἄλλ' ὁ περὶ ψυχῆς ἄλλως δοξάζων ἀγνοεῖ ὡς θαυμαστοῦ τούτου κτήματος ἀμελεῖ, Laws 727e]. Hence my suggestion of 'earth-bound', which is apposite considering what follows - οἱ μέθη καὶ ὕπνω ἑαυτοὺς ἐκδε δωκότες.

*sleepfulness.* To translate ὕπνος here as simply 'sleep' is not particularly helpful to the reader, as what seems to be implied is not normal everyday 'sleep' - a necessity for all humans - since such normal healthy sleep is a strange companion for 'intoxicating liquor'. Regarding ὕπνος, Jebb in his commentary on *Antigone* in respect of ὕπνος ὁ παντογῆρως (v.606) mentioned that "sleep, the renewer of vigour, could not be described as 'bringing old age to all'. Nor can the epithet be explained as 'enfeebling all', in the sense of 'subduing them'; nor, again, as 'attending on all, even to old age'," which led him to write that παντογῆρως was probably corrupt and to suggest, as some others had done, an emendation.

The fact that sleep personified, as Hypnos/Somnus, is the brother of Death [qv. ἔνθ' Ὑπνῷ ξύμβλητο κασιγνήτῳ Θανάτῳ, Iliad, 14.231] is also in favour of normal, healthy, sleep not being meant, as does what follows - θελγόμενοι ὕπνῳ ἀλόγῳ. Thus a possible alternative would be to interpret ὕπνος here somewhat metaphorically, either as a 'state of mind' (such as 'sleepwalking through life')

or as something akin to soporation (an underused English word, from the Latin) with the meaning here of 'an inclination or a tendency to sleep excessively or unnecessarily; to be inactive, drowsy, sleepful; disconnected from reality'. Hence my tentative interpretation - 'sleepfulness'.

*unknowing of theos.* ἀγνωσία τοῦ θεοῦ. Unknowing is a more suitable English word - given its meaning, usage (past and present) and given the context - than 'ignorance'

*stop your drunkenness.* παύσασθε δὲ κραιπαλῶντες. Literally, 'cease to be intoxicated'. It is interesting to compare this preaching to what Plutarch wrote about Demosthenes:

ὁδυρομένου δὲ τοῦ Δημοσθένους πρὸς αὐτόν ὅτι πάντων φιλοπονώτατος ὢν τῶν λεγόντων καὶ μικροῦ δέων καταναλωκέναι τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀκμὴν εἰς τοῦτο χάριν οὐκ ἔχει πρὸς τὸν δῆμον, ἀλλὰ κραιπαλῶντες ἄνθρωποι ναῦται καὶ ἀμαθεῖς ἀκούονται καὶ κατέχουσι τὸ βῆμα, παρορᾶται δ' αὐτός [Demosthenes, 7.1]

To him, Demosthenes complained that although he was an industrious orator and had expended much bodily vigour in pursuing that duty, he was not favoured by the people who ignored him but listened to those who were intoxicated, the ignorant, and sailors, when they and their like held the floor.

28.

*change your ways.* μετανοήσατε. Not 'repent', which imposes a particular religious interpretation upon the text.

*have kinship with the unknowing ones.* συγκοινωνήσαντες τῇ ἀγνοίᾳ. Kinship in the sense of being 'kindred spirits', or 'fellow travellers'.

*dark phaos.* σκοτεινοῦ φωτός. An interesting phrase, lost in translation when φως is translated as 'light'. See the note on phaos in section 4.

29.

*threw themselves down at my feet.* ἑαυτοὺς πρὸ ποδῶν μου ῥίψαντε. A literal translation, although, given what follows, it seems unlikely that this is a metaphorical expression of their eagerness to learn. Indeed, this whole section seems rather at variance with the rest of the text - especially considering the following καθοδηγὸς ἐγενόμην τοῦ γένους - although perhaps 'the guide', having only just been informed of certain esoteric matters by Pœmandres, is here in this section somewhat obliquely revealing that he himself has yet (qv. section 25) to offer up "that eagerness which deceives; the arrogance of command; profane insolence."

*became a guide to those of my kind.* That is, not 'a guide to my race/mankind' but a guide to those who, seeking immortality, desire to undertake the journey through the seven spheres and thus are akin to - of the same type as - the guide.

*informing them of the logoi.* τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων. The logoi [plural of logos] are - qv. the note on θεωθῆναι in section 26 - the various apparent forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumatic logos, the phasmal logos, and the logos kyrios, previously mentioned in the text. They are often considered to be how the logos is sometimes manifest to us, as mortals who are yet to begin or are yet to progress far along the septenary path toward immortality. Furthermore, those who are on the journey - following the way to theos - are also logoi.

*logoi of sapientia.* σοφίας λόγους. Something more than just 'words of [the] wisdom' is meant, especially as the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context, in this case of 'the opus mysterium'. The use here, in my translation, of the terms *logoi* and *sapientia* is intended - as with transliterations such as phaos - to cause the reader to pause and perhaps engender in them a certain curiosity as to what the terms may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply, and to thus (and hopefully) convey something about the original text.

*celestial elixir.* ἀμβροσίου ὕδατος. Literally, 'ambrosial water'; the food/drink that, in mythology, confers and maintains the immortality of the gods and chosen mortals.

### 30.

*temperance of [the] psyche.* τῆς ψυχῆς νῆψις. Again transliterating ψυχῆς, since the English word 'soul' imposes particular - religious/philosophical, and/or modern - meanings on the text, whereas it may well be used here in its classical/Hellenic sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; that is, as referring to that 'thing' (principle, or cause) which animates mortal beings making them 'alive', and which principle or cause was also personified as Psyche.

*genuine insight.* ἀληθινὴ ὄρασις. Cf. μεγίστην θέαν in section 27.

*expression of the logos.* It not clear how or in what form this manifestation of the logos occurs, although the context - of silence - might suggest that 'utterance' or 'speech' is not meant.

*the logos of authority.* τῆς αὐθεντίας λόγου. A similar expression occurs in section 3 also in reference to Pömandres - τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς, the perceivance of authority.

*this revealing.* I take the sense of ἀληθείας here to be not some abstract

(undefined, probably contentious and thus possibly undefinable) 'truth' but rather as a revealing of what is 'genuine' as distinct from what is mere 'appearance'. Here, literally, '*the* revealing' - of the nature of mortals, of the way to immortality, of logos and of theos.

### 31.

*Agios o theos, father of all beings.* ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων. For πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων, see the note in section 22.

I have given, as an intimation, a transliteration of the first part, as these are doxologies, similar to the Kyrie eleison [Κύριε ἐλέησον], and much (if not all) of their numinous/sacred/mystical/esoteric quality and meaning are lost when they are translated into plain - or into archaic, KJV type - English. Although they are best read/recited in the original Greek, the Latin preserves much of the numinosity of these and other such doxologies. The Latin of the nine doxologies given here is:

Sanctus deus pater universorum.  
Sanctus deus, cuius consilium ad finem deducitur a propriis potentiis.  
Sanctus deus, qui cognosci vult et cognoscitur a suis.  
Sanctus es, qui verbo constituisti entia omnia.  
Sanctus es, cuius universa natura imago nata est.  
Sanctus es, quem natura non formavit.  
Sanctus es, qui omni potentia es fortior.  
Sanctus es, qui omni excellentia es maior.  
Sanctus es, qui omnes superas laudes.

The Greek text is:

ἅγιος ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων.  
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων.  
ἅγιος ὁ θεός, ὃς γνωσθῆναι βούλεται καὶ γινώσκεται τοῖς ἰδίοις.  
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα.  
ἅγιος εἶ, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφυ.  
ἅγιος εἶ, ὃν ἡ φύσις οὐκ ἐμόρφωσεν.  
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης δυνάμεως ἰσχυρότερος.  
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ πάσης ὑπεροχῆς μείζων.  
ἅγιος εἶ, ὁ κρείττων τῶν ἐπαίνων.

ἅγιος ὁ approximates to 'Numinous is' [theos] - qv. the note on ἅγιος in section 5 - and ἅγιος εἶ to 'Numinous are' [you].

As to why there are nine doxologies, it may be (and probably is) just a coincidence, or it may reflect the 7+2 structure of the 7 causal aspects (the hebdomad) and the 2 'acausal' modes of being beyond them (qv. the note on δύναμις in section 26).

*his own arts.* I take the sense of δυνάμεων here to be not 'powers', forces (or something similar) but 'arts'; that is, those abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths - of the 'artisan-creator' - which are inherent in theos and express the very nature of theos. Abilities, qualities, skills, and strengths, which an artisan - with assistance and help and instruction from theos, the chief artisan - uses, for example, to 'fashion seven viziers' and the 'fine artisements of physis'. See sections 9-13 and the notes thereon.

*whose disposition is to be recognized.* γνωσθῆναι here with γινώσκεται is not exactly the straightforward '[who] wills/desires to be known' but rather the more subtle '[whose] disposition is to be recognized', and (i) disposition/inclination as an expression of the nature, the very being, of theos, (ii) to be recognized in the sense of to be perceived for who and what theos is, in essence, in very being. Those who so recognize theos - who thus understand and 'appreciate' theos and are cognizant of the type of Being theos is - are those who partake in some way, or who re-present or emanate, or who 'imitate' [qv. Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ] the nature of that Being; and which Being is therefore 'recognized/understood by those who are of his [type of] being,' although the Greek literally means "is recognized by his own".

*Agios es.* For ἅγιος εἶ. Combining the Latin with the Greek, for readability and expressiveness.

*form all being.* In both senses of the term 'form' - constitute, and form being into beings and which beings are or can be re-united with Being (theos) by logos.

*you who engender all physis as eikon.* The meaning and significance of this are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all physis - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the



seven spheres:

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. [Section 25]

*you whom the Physis did not morph.* Given the construction - ὃν ἡ φύσις - I have capitalized Physis here (see sections 14 and 17]. By 'morph' is meant what the Greek term (ἐμόρφωσεν) implies, which is 'shape or transform' into some-thing-else, to give some-thing the 'semblance' of theos . That is, theos was, is, and remains, theos; there is no-thing resembling theos.

*you who are mightier than all artifice.* The artifice - the works, expedients, skill, manifestations, artifices, products, machinations, ingenuity, the 'domination', and the force - of others.

It is interesting to compare this might, the strength and power of theos, with what Epictetus writes about human strength in his *Discourses*:

οὔτε τύραννος κωλύσει με θέλοντα οὔτε δεσπότης οὔτε οἱ πολλοὶ τὸν ἕνα οὔθ' ὁ ἰσχυρότερος τὸν ἀσθενέστερον: τοῦτο γὰρ ἀκώλυτον δέδοται ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἑκάστῳ [4.5]

neither a tyrannos nor some Lord shall negate my intent; nor some crowd although I be just one; nor someone stronger although I be weaker, since such unhindrance is a gift, to everyone, from theos

*wordful.* The expressive term 'wordful' is more suitable here than 'speech', and also contrasts well with 'ineffable' and 'inexpressible'.

32.

*the knowledge.* For τῆς γνώσεως, although 'acquiring the knowledge' and 'the gnosis' are alternatives, so that with the latter it reads "I ask of you to grant that I am not foiled in the gnosis germane to our essence", with the phrase 'our essence' referring to the essence - οὐσία - of both mortals and theos.

favour. χάρις. A gift, favour, or kindness, here from theos [χάρις θεοῦ] and which type of gift is also mentioned in the New Testament (for example, Luke, 2.40). See also the quotation from Irenaeus in the note on *the father of all beings* in section 21.

*the unknowing.* In respect of 'unknowing' see the note in section 27.

*who are your children.* In respect of υἱὸς as the gender neutral 'child', rather than 'son', see the note on υἱὸς θεοῦ in section 6, and also the note on gender neutrality under ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in section 19.

*share in [your] numinosity.* For συναγιάζειν.

---

### **Ιερός Λόγος**

### **An Esoteric Mythos**

### **Tractate III**

#### **A Pagan And Esoteric Mythos**

While the title - Ιερός Λόγος - of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is generally translated as either "A Sacred Discourse" or "A Holy Sermon", it would perhaps be more accurate to translate as *An Esoteric Mythos* given (i) that it describes a numinous theogony of the kind recounted to initiates of the mystery traditions of ancient Greece, and thus recounts a mythos that pre-dates the Biblical story of Genesis, as given in the Septuagint (LXX), by centuries, and (ii) that ἱερός λόγος/ἱεροί λόγοι (an esoteric mythos/esoteric mythoi) were phrases often used to describe such mystery traditions, both Greek and Greco-Egyptian, as, for example, by Herodotus {1}.

For it is possible that the often-stated belief of the tractate being influenced by the story recounted in LXX is incorrect, and that whatever similarities there are between the text of the tractate and Greek text of the Biblical story of Genesis might be due either to the scribe of what was a previously esoteric aural tradition being familiar with LXX or some parts of it and borrowing a particular word or words to try and express an aspect of that paganus tradition (an opinion held by the Christian Byzantine historian Mikhael Psellus, d. 1078 CE), or to the Biblical story of creation itself being influenced by a more ancient Greek mythos or mythoi, just as it was influenced by similar, more ancient, mythoi from Sumeria and elsewhere. In addition, the overt polytheism of the tractate, and Greek concepts such as φύσις (physis) and Πνεῦμα (pneuma) {2}, are at odds with such influence and with that Biblical story.

Furthermore, far from it being (again, as has often been previously believed) a very corrupt, or overwritten text, the *Ἱερός Λόγος* most probably reasonably represents, like the *Pymander* tractate, a pagan metaphysical *weltanschauung* germane to the period of its composition and one which is based upon or recounts an earlier, and most probably aural, tradition. Furthermore, as Wildberg has suggested, the text might simply incorporate some marginalia {3}.

Such an esoteric mythos, as recorded in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* hermetic tractate, had - like the Biblical Genesis story - antecedents. Such as

οἱ Γῆς ἐξεγένοντο καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστερόεντος

those who came-into-being from Gaia and the starry heavens {4}

from the *theogony* of Hesiod (106) - written c. 700 BCE - of which there is a remarkably similar expression in funerary inscriptions, from some four centuries later (c. 300 BCE) in Pharsalos, Thessalyon,

Γῆς παῖς εἰμι καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἀστ<ερόεντος>

I am a child of Gaia and the starry heavens

and on a gold funerary tablet (c. 200 BCE) found at Eleutherna, Crete,

ΓΑΣ ΥΙΟΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ

Γᾶς υἱός ἡμι καὶ Ὀρανῶ ἀστερόεντος {5}

and also in a, purportedly Orphic, religious text (the *Derveni papyrus*) dating from c. 330 BCE {6} which contains the Hesiodian phrase οἱ Διὸς ἐξεγένοντο [those who came-into-being from Zeus]. Thus, it is part of this ancient esoteric mythos, and/or its antecedents, that may well be echoed in LXX (Genesis, 1:1), written centuries later:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν

In the beginning, Theos produced the heavens and the Earth {7}

and which Biblical text is, interestingly, given by Aquila - qv. the *Hexapla* {8} - as:

Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἐκτίσεν ὁ Θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ σὺν τὴν γῆν

As foundation, Theos formed the heavens and the Earth {9}

It is thus my view that the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is a valuable hermetic document, presenting as it does - probably after centuries of aural transmission as befitted ἱεροί λόγοι - an esoteric weltanschauung that pre-dates, and thus is independent of, not only Christianity but also of the myths, stories, and theology, manifest in the Old Testament.

Understood thus, the Ἰερός Λόγος tractate is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum; and a text which the author of the Pœmandres tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

### **Commentary, Translation, and Text**

The references in the commentary here to the *Pœmandres* tractate are to my translation of and commentary on that text for I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases, used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text, some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pœmandres*, a certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

Purely for readability, I have arranged the translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations in the commentary and notes are mine.

### *Notes*

{1} (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

{2} In ἱεροί λόγοι and in many hermetic texts, φύσις suggests something more than what the terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote. That is - qv. the Pœmandres tractate (see footnote 8) - it suggests to "know what is real" and to apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to thus have an understanding of ontology. For physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

In respect of pneuma, qv. DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918)

{3} Christian Wildberg: *The Genesis of a Genesis: Corpus Hermeticum, Tractate III*, in Lance Jenott and Sarit Kattan Gribetz: *Jewish and Christian Cosmogony in Late Antiquity* (pp.139-166). *Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum*, 155. Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen, 2013.

{4} Pedantically, a more accurate translation of ἀστερόεντος would be stelliferous - hence the 'stelliferous heavens' - but 'starry heavens' is far more poetic.

{5} Interestingly, some similar inscriptions - such as another one from Eleutherna - are gender neutral and simply say ΓΥΑΤΗΡΚΑΙΩΠΑΝΩΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ. That is, 'of Gaia and the starry heavens'.

{6} Bernabé, Alberto, and Francesc Casadesús. *Orfeo y la tradición órfica: Un reencuentro*. Madrid: Akal. 2008.

{7} Although I give here, for Ἐν ἀρχῇ, the conventional 'In the beginning', I am inclined to prefer 'In primacy' (the first thing/principle/origin of; cf. Anaximander, where there is also mention of the heavens and 'the world' or cosmos: πρῶτος τοῦτο τοῦνομα κομίσας τῆς ἀρχῆς λέγει δ' αὐτήν μήτε ὕδωρ μήτε ἄλλο τι τῶν καλουμένων εἶναι στοιχείων ἀλλ' ἑτέραν τινὰ φύσιν ἄπειρον ἐξ ἧς ἅπαντας γίνεσθαι τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ τοὺς ἐν αὐτοῖς κόσμους. Simplicius, *Physics*, 24:13-21).

An alternative, suggested by the Greek text of Aquila of Genesis 1:1, would be "As foundation, Theos produced..." Furthermore, instead of the 'creavit' of the Latin Vulgate, the older Vetus Latina has 'In principio *fecit* deus caelum et terram.'

{8} Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quæ Supersunt*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1875.

{9} Literally, "In foundation, Theos built/produced..."

The Latin of Jermone - who, according to certain sources, was acquainted with the text of Aquila - is *in principio creavit Deus caelum et terram*.

---

## Translation

[1] The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.  
The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:  
The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.  
For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance.

In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen,  
Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos.  
Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground,  
Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence.  
And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

[2] With all beings unformed and not yet presenced,  
What was lightsome was separated out, upward  
And what was burdensome set in fluidic ground  
With all defined through Fire, then elevated - and conveyed - by Pnuema.  
Thus the heavens became perceivable in seven spheres,  
Deities represented in the arrangements of the stars,  
With the outer revolving in the æther, and circulating by the Pnuema of theos.

[3] Through their distinguishing influence, each deity did what was assigned to them  
So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed and slithering  
And those dwelling in water and those that fly,  
And harvestable seeds and pastures and all kinds of verdant flowers,  
<Seeding within> the semination of rebirth.  
Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos, a living witness of physis,  
So that the multitude of mortals can husband all that is below the heavens,  
Appreciate honour, and propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning.

Thus, every psyche - embodied in flesh - can  
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens  
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;  
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change  
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour.

[4] For this is the commencement of their living, of such learning  
As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful, and the discoagulation of it,  
For the great earthly artialized memorials they have left  
Will, with the passing of the seasons, fade  
Just as, for the generations of psyche-bearing flesh and fruitful seeds and artiselements,  
There will be renewance through incumbency, renewance through the divine  
And by the circumferent coursing of Physis.

The divine is all of that mixel: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis  
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

## Commentary

### 1.

*The numen of all beings is theos.* Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός. The sense of δόξα here, especially given the following mention of θεῖος and φύσις, is of immanence and of transcendent sublimity, encompassing both (i) the interpretation given to the word in LXX and the New Testament, of a divine glory (qv. Exodus 16:10, Matthew 25:31, and Luke 2:9) and thus of what is considered to be - that is, is outwardly manifest as - glorious, or splendid, as in Matthew 4:8, a sense well-expressed in the Latin of Jerome: iterum adsumit eum diabolus in montem excelsum valde et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi et gloriam eorum, and (ii) the classical, more personal sense, of honour, and reputation or repute, the latter as for example referenced by Boethius: Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat: ὦ δόξα, δόξα, μυρίοισι δὴ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοτον ὠγκώσας μέγαν (Book III, vi).

Hence I have opted for 'numen', rather than the usual 'splendour' or 'glory' which do not, in my view given their modern connotations and common usage, express the sense of the Greek; with the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: "numinal and of numinal physis", where by numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculous) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism.

In this paganus context, the numinous is therefore what is, or what manifests (presences) or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) what is regarded or understood as sacred, numinal, sublime, awe-inspiring, beautiful, noble, esoteric, beyond the mundane, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control. Thus, in terms of ἱεροὶ λόγοι in general, the numen reminds us of 'the natural order of things' (the physis of theos, of theoi, of Nature and of the heavens), reminds us of our own physis, and thus of our duties and responsibilities as mortals (especially in relation to deities) and thence the need to avoid hubris.

In respect of hubris, Hesiod, in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218, wrote:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε:

ὔβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Notes:

- a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and - importantly - of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' - as the name of the goddess - is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.
- b. Mischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).
- c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.
- d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

*Theos.* θεὸς. As with the Pœmandres tractate, I have opted for a transliteration, for the Biblical 'God' is not what is meant here, given the title of the tractate and the content, while the word 'god' (singular, lower case) now has certain connotations (some of which are theological) not always relevant to ancient Greek deities. In terms of *theos*, what is most probably meant here - cf. Hesiod's Theogony - is the, or a, prime, first, or primordial deity (such as Οὐρανός) from whence came-into-being the other Greek deities, including Zeus (cf. the use of πρῶτον by Plato in *Timeas*, 69b).

Thus, in respect of this tractate, I translate θεοὶ not as 'gods' but as 'deities' in the hope of providing a more balanced view of this particular ancient pagan text.



*Physis*. As in my translation of Pœmandres tractate I have given a transliteration to suggest, as I wrote there, "something more than what 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denotes. That is, to know what is real and apprehend the physis of those real things - νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ τῶν φύσιν; to discern the physis, the true nature, of beings. That is, to have an understanding of ontology; for physis is a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being".

Occasionally I have capitalized physis, when the context merits it, such as when the physis of what we term Nature is meant or implied; or when - as here at the beginning - it is an attribute of theos.

τῶν ὄντων. What is real/what exists (Reality/Existence) - qv. the beginning of the Pœmandres tractate, and my commentary thereon.

νοῦς. *Perceivation*, not 'mind', qv. Pœmandres 2.

*substance*. ὕλη, the *materia* of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence. qv. Pœmandres 10.

*sapientia*. σοφία. qv. Pœmandres 29.

*vigour*. ἐνέργεια. In the sense of vitality and vigorous activity. See my note on ἡ εἰμαρμένη, Pœmandres 15.

*incumbency*. Often personified as Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency; that is, of *wyrd*: of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being. To render ἀνάγκη here somewhat blandly as 'necessity' is to miss both the subtle esotericism of an ἱερός λόγος and what Empedocles wrote:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,  
αἰδίων, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὄρκοις·  
εὖτέ τις ἀμπλακίησι φόνωι φίλα γυῖα μήνηι,  
νείκεί θ' ὅς κε ἐπίορκον ἀμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσει,  
δαίμονες οἷτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο,  
τρίς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,  
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἶδεα θνητῶν  
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.  
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,  
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὐδας ἀπέπτυσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς  
ἡελίου φαέθοντος, ὃ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·  
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.  
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,  
Νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.

There exists an insight by Ananke, an ancient resolution  
Of the gods, immutable and sealed by vows,  
Regarding when one of the daimons - those whose allotted portion of life is long -  
Has their own hands stained from murder  
Or who, once having sworn an oath, because of some feud breaks that oath.  
For they shall for ten thousand tripled seasons wander away from the beautified,  
Begotten during that period in all manner of mortal form  
And exchanging during that voyage one vexation for another:

The fierce Ætherials chase them to the Sea,  
The Sea spits them out onto dusty ground,  
Gaia hurls them to the burning light of the Sun  
Who flings them back to those swirling Ætherials.  
Moved from one to the other, all detest them.

I am one of those, a vagabond in exile from the gods  
Who has to rely on strongful Disagreement.

*Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Diels-Kranz, B115*

#### Notes:

νεῖκος (disagreement) is - according to what we can adduce of the philosophy of Empedocles from the fragments of his writings that we possess - a fundamental principle, and one understood in relation to another fundamental principle, Φιλότης, expressive as they both are of the logos (λόγος) by which we can possibly apprehend the workings of the cosmic order (κόσμος). However, the common translations - of 'strife' and 'love' respectively - do not in my view express what Empedocles seems to be trying to convey, which is 'disagreement' and 'fellowship' (a communal or kindred working-together in pursuit of a common interest or goal). For while disagreement sometimes disrupts fellowship, it is often necessary as the genesis of productive change.

Thus, just as Odysseus had to rely on the support of Athena, who disagreed with how Poseidon treated Odysseus, so does the 'vagabond in exile from the deities/the gods' have to rely on disagreements among the immortals to end their own exile.

*Abyss.* ἄβυσσος.

*A delicate apprehending pneuma.* πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν. In respect of νοερός, the sense here is not 'intelligent'/'intelligence' - as in "quickness or superiority of understanding, sagacity", etcetera - but rather of self-awareness; that is, of possessing a faculty to perceive, comprehend, and to rationally understand the external world. Which is why I have opted for 'apprehending'.

*influence.* δύναμις. Not here 'force' or 'power' per se but rather the influence arising from, inherent in, the numen by virtue of the numinosity of theos. The kind of influence which can nurture a 'delicate apprehending pneuma'.

*Kaos.* χάος.

*numinous phaos*. φῶς ἅγιον. Regarding the transliteration of φῶς - using the Homeric φάος (phaos) - see my commentary on Pœmandres 4; and regarding ἅγιος as 'numinous', rather than the conventional 'holy' or 'sacred', refer to the commentary on Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς above, and especially the note on the duality of the numinous in pagan weltanschauungen in my commentary on Pœmandres 5.

*beneath (that) sandy ground*. ὑφ' ἄμμῳ. Regarding ἄμμος, qv. Xenophon, *Apomnemoneumata* 3.3.6 - πότερον ἐπάγειν τοὺς πολεμίους ἐπὶ τὴν ἄμμον κελεύσεις - for the reference, in context, seems to be to sandy ground or to sea marshes or, and perhaps more metaphorically, to waterlogged (boggy, unsuitable) land in general, and not necessarily (as some have theorized) to the sandy places and sand dunes in North Africa (such as in Egypt and Libya) as mentioned in Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 3.50.2, τὴν δὲ χροάν ἄμμῳ παραπλησίαν ἔχουσι.

It is possible that ἄμμος, in regard to the ἱερός λόγος recounted in this tractate, had some esoteric or metaphysical meaning, now lost.

*flowing* (as in fluidic). The sense of ὑγρός here and in Pœmandres 4.

*essence*. οὐσίας. qv. Pœmandres 14.

*parsements*. For στοιχεῖον. qv. Pœmandres 8.

*Coagulated*. πήγνυμι.

<particularize>. As in 'distinguish between'. The MSS have καταδιερῶσι. Various emendations have been proposed, including καταδιωρῶσι, while Wildberg has suggested that "and all of the deities..." - καὶ θεοὶ πάντες καταδιωρῶσι - was originally marginalia.

2.

*With all beings unformed and not yet presenced*. ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων. An interesting phrase, with the English term 'presenced' perhaps expressing at least something of its philosophical implications derived as that term is from the noun 'presencing' (dating from c.1637) and meaning as it does "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established." For, as the tractate goes to explain, what becomes formed and manifest are 'the seven-fold heavens' and deities, manifest as stars, within them.

In respect of ἀκατασκευάστων, while some commentators have pointed to Genesis 1:2 - ἡ δὲ γῆ ἦν ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος, 'and the Earth was unperceived and formless' - as a parallel, σκευαστῶν occurs in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (5.1013b) in reference to the classification of differences in

causation, such as whether or not something is 'manufactured', as in produced by an artisan (such as a statue, ἀνδριάς) or by some other means, and, regardless, πάντα ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς μεταβολῆς ἢ στάσεως. Interestingly, in his commentary on the Metaphysics, Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Apposuit autem cum insit, ad differentiam privationis et contrarii: nam statua quidem fit ex aere, quod inest statuae iam factae; fit etiam ex infigurato, quod quidem non inest statuae iam factae. Unde aes est causa statuae, non autem infiguratum, cum sit principium per accidens tantum" (Commentaria, *In libros Physicorum*, 2, Lectio 5).

Thus, there is initially a 'privation of form', unformed being, which is then formed - as a statue from unshaped bronze - by theos as artisan-creator, and thus a possible metaphysical parallel in Pœmandres, such as in 31: πατὴρ τῶν ὅλων... οὗ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων...ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα [father of all beings...whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts...you who by logos form all being]. It is also interesting to compare all this with Plato's description in the Timaeus, 69b-c, in which his expression καὶ τῶν μὲν θεῶν αὐτὸς γίγνεται δημιουργός is noteworthy.

*lightsome/burdensome*. Used in preference to the less descriptive, ubiquitous, 'light' and 'heavy'. The whole passage is somewhat obscure, but if ἀποδιωρίσθη τὰ ἐλαφρὰ εἰς ὕψος was a metaphorical 'separating out' of what is 'light' from what is not light - rather than what is 'light' being somehow sent upwards, 'to the heights', or 'separated off upwards' - and, in particular, if ἀνακρεμασθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι was understood as referring to what - having been defined by, wrought in form through Fire, as bronze and iron are formed and shaped through fire - becomes elevated and conveyed by Pneuma, then philosophically it makes sense, especially given the Greek concept of the psyche (the immortal essence, or 'spirit') of sentient beings being conveyed through life and beyond (and presenced) by (or as) Pnuema, or by our mortal body (as mentioned by Plato).

*seven spheres*. qv. Pœmandres 9, 17, etcetera.

*the outer revolving in the æther*. The text is rather obscure, and one assumes 'the outer' refers to the outermost, the peripheral, sphere. Furthermore, I have here translated ἀήρ not as 'air' but as æther since ordinary, terrestrial, air is most certainly not what is meant and the ambiguous term æther (understood classically or otherwise) is suggestive of what may be meant. For whether ἀήρ here - as æther - refers to the fifth element as mentioned by Plato in *Epinomis* (981c) - πέντε οὖν ὄντων τῶν σωμάτων, πῦρ χρὴ φάναι καὶ ὕδωρ εἶναι καὶ τρίτον ἀέρα, τέταρτον δὲ γῆν, πέμπτον δὲ αἰθέρα - or whether it refers to a more mystical or esoteric, or hypothesized, substance that formed part of ἱεροί λόγοι, is an interesting question.

*So that there came-into-being beasts four-footed.* cf. Poemandres 11.

<Seeding within them> the semination of rebirth. τὸ σπέρμα τῆς παλιγγενεσίας ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἐσπερμολόγουν. Although the text is obscure and has been variously emended by Reitzenstein, Nock, et al, the presumption is that this rebirth - or, alternatively, and more probably, this 'regeneration through offspring' - refers either to the deities themselves or (more probably) to the previously described living things which the deities brought-into-being.

My view is that what seems to be suggested by the text is that the deities seeded within living beings (human, animal, and otherwise) the ability to regenerate through offspring.

*Thus can the offspring of mortals apprehend the works of theos.* There is an interesting parallel here with some Quranic ayat, such as:

"The creations in Heaven and Earth, the very change of Night to Day, are Signs [from Allah] for those gifted with understanding, those who whether sitting, standing or reclining on their sides, give praise to Allah and who frequently recall those creations in Heaven and Earth." 3:189-191 Interpretation of Meaning

*mortals should husband all that is below the heavens.* I take the sense of δεσποτεία here - given what precedes and what follows - to suggest husbandry (of Earth) rather than to mean power in the sense of mastery (as in over a slave).

*appreciate honour.* Given the context - mortals, theos, deities, physis - I take the meaning of ἀγαθός here to refer to what is personal, not to some abstract concept of 'good'. Hence the personal virtue of honour; to behaving, to living, in a noble, a valourous, way, as opposed to being dishonourable or cowardly; a contrast mentioned in the Iliad, Book 17, 631-2: τῶν μὲν γὰρ πάντων βέλε' ἄπτεται ὅς τις ἀφήῃ ἢ κακὸς ἢ ἀγαθός [whether hurled by someone honourable or dishonourable, all of the missiles still strike their target].

The personal sense of ἀγαθός here also has the virtue of making what follows, at the end of section 3 - γινῶναι ἀγαθῶν καὶ φαύλων καὶ πᾶσαν ἀγαθῶν δαιδαλουργίαν εὐρεῖν - somewhat more understandable. Hence, a discovery or a learning of "all the arts of honour" in contrast to discovering "every artful workmanship of good things".

*propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning.* qv. Poemandres 18.

*a living witness of physis.* The sense of ἐνεργοῦσαν here is poetically metaphysical, not literal. Hence a "living witness of physis" rather than an 'active' or 'working' one. An alternative would be 'presenced', suggested by Aristotle's Metaphysics: ἐπεὶ δὲ περὶ τῆς κατὰ κίνησιν λεγομένης δυνάμεως

εἴρηται περὶ ἐνεργείας διορίσωμεν τί τέ ἐστὶν ἡ ἐνέργεια καὶ ποῖόν τι... ἔστι δὴ ἐνέργεια τὸ ὑπάρχειν τὸ πρᾶγμα μὴ οὕτως ὥσπερ λέγομεν δυνάμει. (1048a)

*with every psyche, embodied in flesh.* The text following this is (to the end of the tractate) is often so obscure (or corrupted) that any interpretation is tentative. Wildberg's suggestion that διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας...καὶ φύσεως ἐνεργείας is marginalia, while interesting, does little to alleviate the obscurity of this part of the text.

*mirificence.* This rather neglected English word - from the post-classical Latin word mirificentia: the action or the fact of doing what is or appears to be wondrous, portentous - in my view expresses the meaning implicit in διὰ δρομήματος θεῶν ἐγκυκλίων τερασπορίας εἰς κατοπτεῖαν οὐρανοῦ somewhat better than such turns of phrase as "the wonder-working course of..," or "by portent-sowings of the course of..."

*presenced.* qv. the previous note on ἐνεργοῦσαν.

*understand divine influence as wyrdful change.* γνῶσιν θείας δυνάμεως μοίρης ὀχλουμένης. This exceptionally obscure Greek phrase has been interpreted in a variety of ways, with my interpretation just one among many. 'Wyrd' rather than 'fate', given how the term 'fate' has acquired contemporary meanings not relevant here.

*all the arts of honour.* Less poetically, more literally, "the skills of all the honourable arts".

4.

*As is - by circumferent deities coursing - wyrdful.* This is open to three different interpretations, as perhaps was intended. First, that it is the deities themselves who determine the wyrd of mortals. Second, that a person's wyrd can be discovered - learned, possibly predicted - by astrological means; that is, by understanding the movement of the planets and the stars associated with the deities since the "deities are represented in the arrangements of the stars". Third, given the septenary nature of the deities - for "the heavens are perceivable in seven spheres" - one's wyrd can be discovered by an esoteric and septenary anados as described in the Pœmandres tractate.

*artialized.* From verb artize - qv. 'artisements' below - and meaning here produced or constructed by an artisan or skilled craftsman.

*which the passing of the seasons will fade.* Not χρόνος as some abstract 'time' measured by some human manufactured mechanism such as a clock (a relatively recent concept, in terms of aeonic ἱεροὶ λόγοι), but rather measured by the passing of the seasons, as determined - for example - by the appearance and the disappearance in the night sky of certain constellations and stars:

θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων  
φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος  
στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κυνὸς δίκην,  
ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὁμήγυριν,  
καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χειῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς  
λαμπροὺς δυνάστας, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι  
ἀστέρας, ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολὰς τε τῶν.

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,  
This vigil a year in length, where I repose  
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs  
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations  
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:  
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens  
As stars when they come forth or pass away.

(Agamemnon, 1-7)

*artisements*. The products of the skilled work of the artisan and the artist; their artisanship; cf. the 16th century English verb *artize*: to exercise a skill, to pursue a skilled occupation such as that of an artisan.

*the circumferent coursing of Physis*. Given the context, I have - as at the beginning of the text - capitalized *physis* here.

*mixon*. Alternate (old) spelling of *mixture*, meaning the condition or state of being mixed, melded, compounded, combined.

---

Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς

Chaldron Or Monas

Tractate IV

## Introduction

The title given to the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς, requires some consideration if it is to be translated without using English words that have, in the centuries since the text was written, acquired meanings which are not or which may not be relevant to or representative of the metaphysics, and the cosmogony, of such an ancient text; with an injudicious choice of words more often than not resulting in the modern reader projecting certain interpretations upon the text, as might be the case in translating, without some comment, κρατῆρ as 'basin', cup, or 'mixing bowl', μονάς as 'monad', and Τάτ as Thoth.

In respect of κρατῆρ, a more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - translation, given the esoteric nature and antiquity of the text, would be chaldron (an alternative spelling of 'cauldron'), since basin, cup, and 'mixing bowl' are not only too prosaic but also do not conjure the appropriate archetypal imagery: of the primal artisan-creator coagulating and mixing primal substances - cf. tractate III, Ἰερός Λόγος - to produce, to bring-into-being by means of Logos, the cosmic order and thence mortal beings.

In respect of μονάς, the transliteration monas would be more appropriate - and certainly more subtle - than 'monad' given that the term monad is now so often associated with such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean/neo-Pythagorean and Gnostic, an association which may or may not be relevant here. Furthermore, monas has a long and interesting esoteric usage, including (somewhat recently) by John Dee in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi*



*summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568* - a text included (on page 334) in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, Containing Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language*, published in London in 1652 - who wrote "our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law, both binde and lewse", and who also entitled one of his works *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564), in which work he described (in Theorem XVIII) a septenary system somewhat similar to that of the Poemandres tractate:

In respect of Τάτ, while there is no disputing that Thoth is meant, what may or may not be implied by the name Thoth is whether or not there is a primarily Egyptian genesis for the metaphysics and the cosmogony of this particular tractate. For what does 'Egyptian' mean in the context of the Corpus Hermeticum, written when Egypt was a post-Ptolemaic Roman province where Hellenism still thrived? That is, is the text propounding a metaphysics and a cosmogony primarily redolent of indigenous, pre-Alexandrian, times, with Hermes Trismegistus simply a Hellenic name for the ancient Dynastic deity Thoth, and thus with the Greek Hermes possibly being a son of that ancient Egyptian deity? Or is the text redolent of a classical metaphysics and a cosmogony; or of a Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony; or of some syncretism of Egyptian (pre-Alexandrian) weltanschauungen with Hellenic mysticism? Or has the author (or authors) of Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς simply used the name of an ancient deity - Thoth - in order to appeal to an audience of Hellenized Egyptians, or Greeks/Romans dwelling in Egypt, or because it seemed to add some esoteric gravitas to the text? Or, as the title might be taken to imply - of Hermes to Thoth - is it a text intended to inform Egyptians (Hellenized or expatriate Greeks/Romans, or otherwise) about Greek/Hellenic metaphysics and cosmogony, with Thoth thus regarded, symbolically, esoterically, or otherwise, as the son of the Greek divinity Hermes?

In this matter, I incline toward the view - based on some forty years of study of the Corpus Hermeticum and similar mystical and esoteric texts, classical, Hellenic, medieval, Arabic and otherwise - that what is imparted in this tractate, as with the Poemandres and Ἰερός Λόγος, is primarily a mystical, and - for centuries - aural, Greek tradition, albeit one possibly influenced, over time and in some degree, by the metaphysical speculations of later philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. That is, that in Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς and Ἰερός Λόγος and Ποιμάνδρης, we have an intimation of the metaphysics and the cosmogony taught to initiates of that (or those) ancient and aural and paganus Greek mystical tradition(s) mentioned by writers such as Herodotus. And an intimation that is not - a few borrowed illustrative terms notwithstanding - in any significant and metaphysical manner deriving from or influenced by Biblical stories or by early Christian theology or by indigenous Egyptian culture. In the matter of a paganus Greek mystical tradition, the opening of the fourth tractate is, metaphysically, very interesting:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ  
λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ  
πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἑνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει  
δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through  
Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted  
all being, as One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

For it is incorrect and misleading to write about those three tractates - and  
some other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum - as being in any way  
indigenously Egyptian. Rather, their genesis - the tradition they represented -  
was the Greek culture of post-Alexandrian Egypt, a cultural influence so evident  
in the numerous papyri found in places such as Oxyrhynchus, containing as  
such papyri do verses from Homer, Sappho, Menander, Sophocles, and other  
Greek authors.

### **Commentary, Translation, and Text**

The references in the commentary here to the *Pœmandres* and Ἱερός Λόγος are  
to my translations of and commentary on those texts for, as I mentioned in my  
Ἱερός Λόγος,

I have retained the transliterations, and some of the English phrases,  
used and explained there, such as physis, phaos, theos. I have also, as  
there, occasionally used some particular, or some quite obscure  
English words - or forms of them - in order to try and elucidate the  
meaning of the text or to avoid using, in what is a metaphysical text,  
some commonplace term with various connotations (contemporary or  
otherwise) that may lead to a misunderstanding of the text. I have  
endeavoured to explain such obscure words in the commentary. There  
is thus in this translation, as in my translation of *Pœmandres*, a  
certain technical - or rather, esoteric - vocabulary.

As with my Ἱερός Λόγος, I have here, purely for readability, arranged the  
translation into (non-poetic) verses rather than long paragraphs. All translations  
in the commentary are mine.

---

## Translation

[1] Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos  
You should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being,  
As One only, who by thelesis formed all that is.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable  
Or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma  
Even though all such things are from that Being.  
Since that Being is honourable, the desire was to entrust solely to that Being  
Such a cosmic order on Earth:

[2] A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings,  
For just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them  
So did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos  
Because of Logos and Perceiverance.  
Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them,  
Gaining knowledge of their creator.

[3] Thus, Thoth, to all mortals logos was assigned, but not perceiverance  
Even though there was no ill-will, for such ill-will arrives not from there  
But below, associated with mortals whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance.

On account of what, father, did theos not assign perceiverance to all?

Son, the desire was to position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward.

[4] Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down  
With an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals:  
If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron  
Should you accept you can ascend -  
Having discovered how you came-into-being -  
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.

The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceiveration  
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals  
Through having received the perceiveration  
While the many who misunderstood that declaration,  
Having logos without the addition of perceiveration,  
Are unperceptive regarding how and why they came-into-being.

[5] For they have the alertness similar to that of unthinking animals  
And, having an angry and restive disposition,  
Have no respect for what is really valuable  
But instead follow bodily pleasures and their own desires  
Confident as they are that mortals were born for such things.

And yet, Thoth, those who partake to that gift from theos become,  
When set against their deeds, immortal instead of mortal

For they with their perceivance apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly,  
And what is beyond the Heavens.  
Having gone so far, they perceive what is honourable, and, having so perceived,  
They regard what preceded this as a delay, as a problem  
And, with little regard for whatever is embodied and disembodied,  
They strive toward the Monas.

[6] This, Thoth, is the episteme of perceivance,  
Of <considering the divine> and of understanding divinity,  
For the chaldron is numinous.

Father, I also desire to be so immersed.

My son, primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body  
You cannot have affection for yourself, and when you have affection for yourself  
You can acquire perceivance and, having perceivance,  
You can participate in episteme.

Can you, father, explain that?

It is not possible, my son, to be of both the deathful and the divine.  
For there are two kinds of existents, the bodily and the non-bodily,  
Perceived as deathful and divine; a choice of one or of the other  
Should there be a desire to do so. It cannot be both  
With the decline of one uncovering the reality of the other.

[7] By choosing the higher not only is there a good ending - the apotheosis of the mortal -  
For the one who chooses but also a numinous awareness of theos,  
While, if the lower, although it has been the ruination of mortals  
It is no termination against theos  
But rather something garish that passes by amid us yet is unaffectionate  
Even if an impediment to others  
Just as those others are garishly worldly  
Having been influenced by bodily pleasures.

[8] Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours  
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.  
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour  
With theos blameless in this.  
Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse -  
How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations -  
So that we hasten to the Monas.

For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending  
Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge.

[9] But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it  
It yields to us the origin of our knowing.  
Thus should we apprehend such an origin and hasten upon our journey  
For it is not easy to abandon what we have become accustomed to  
And go back to what is elden and in the past.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt  
With what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed  
Having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

Which is why it is akin to itself but different from everything else  
For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied.

[10] This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different  
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Since the Monas is the origin and foundation of everything  
It is within everything as origin and foundation  
For if there is no origin there is nothing  
And the origin is not from anything but itself  
Since it is the origin of everything else,  
Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos  
Without itself being enfolded by any,  
Begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any:

[11] Everything that is begotten is unfinished, partible,  
Liable to decline, resurgence  
Which do not befall what is complete  
For what is resurgent is resurgence from Monas  
But what is brought low is so by its own malady  
Because unable to hold Monas.

This, then, Thoth, is the eikon of the theos  
Insofar as it can be drawn:  
If you - clearly, carefully - and with the eyes of your heart apprehend it  
Then I assure you, my son, that you shall find the path to what is above:  
In truth, the eikon will guide you  
Since the seeing of it is uniquely your own,  
For those who attain such a beholding are attentively held, pulled up,  
Just as it is said lodestone does with iron.

---

## Commentary

### 1.

*artisan*. δημιουργόν. See Poemandres 9. The theme of an artisan-creator, and their artisements, is common to the third tractate (Ἰερός Λόγος) as well. That the tractate begins by using the term artisan, rather than theos, is perhaps significant.

*that Being*. The conventional and grammatical interpretation is "you should understand *him* as..." although how such a human-type gender could be adduced from or manifest by how the 'body' of the artisan-creator is described in subsequent verses is an interesting and relevant metaphysical question.

Can, or should, a 'body' that cannot be touched, that cannot be seen, that

cannot be measured, that is not separable - οὐδὲ διαστατόν - and thus which is not conventionally 'human', be described as male? It is to suggest such metaphysical questions (and the limitations of ordinary language in describing and answering such metaphysical questions) that I have here departed from convention and used 'that Being' instead of 'him'. The term 'Being' also has the advantage that it avoids the gender bias implicit in translating θεός as 'god' given that 'god/God' implies a male entity.

There is also an interesting and perhaps relevant mention, in the second tractate of the Corpus, of the one, the being, who - like an artisan - constructs things: ὁ οὖν θεός <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατὴρ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

However, in terms of gender and Hellenic mythos and metaphysics, it is sometimes overlooked that Γαῖα, Earth Mother, in one of the Homeric hymns, Εἷς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, is described as πρέσβιστος: the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ. Thus, while it might be of "a father to construct" it is "of a mother to bring forth life", to give birth to beings, including the gods themselves.

*presential*. πάρειμι. Presential - from the classical Latin praesentia - means "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or with an individual, and is thus more apposite here than the rather bland word 'present'. Cf. the use of 'presenced' in ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia.

*One only*. ἐνὸς μόνου. A formulaic mystic phrase, implying uniqueness. Cf. ordinary usage in Plato, *Crito* 47, ἢ ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου [...] ἐνὸς μόνου.

*thelesis*. θέλησις. Given what follows - τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὀρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν - a transliteration to suggest something other than a human type 'will' or 'desire'; such as 'disposition'. That is, Being (whatsoever of whomsoever Being is, in terms of gender and otherwise) is predisposed to craft - to presence - being as beings: as immortals (deities), as mortals (humans) and otherwise, qv. ἱερός Λόγος, Poemandres 8 ff, and Poemandres 31: οὐ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ιδίων δυνάμεων (whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts).

*formed*. As an artisan forms their artisements, and thus manifests their skill, their artistry, in what they produce. That is, the artisan-creator has formed, crafted, being (all existence) as beings.

(not) *separable*. οὐδὲ διαστατόν. What is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise.

*Pneuma*. πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on

the text of Poemandres 5:

given that the English alternatives - such as 'spirit' or 'breath' - not only do not always describe what the Greek implies but also suggest things not always or not necessarily in keeping with the Hellenic nature of the text. This particular transliteration has a long history in English, dating back to 1559 CE. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - entitled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

I incline toward the view that πνεῦμα here - like λόγος - does not necessarily imply something theological (in the Christian sense or otherwise) but rather suggests an alternative, more personal, weltanschauung that, being a weltanschauung, is undoctinal and subtle, and which weltanschauung is redolent of Hellenic culture. Subtle and undoctinal in the way that early alchemical texts are subtle and undoctinal and try to express, or hint at (however obscurely to us, now), a weltanschauung, and one which is more paganus than Christian.

*Even though all such things are from that Being.* ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. Literally, 'even though all are from that'. One therefore might understand it to imply 'even though all beings/things are from that Being.'

*honourable.* ἀγαθός. qv. Poemandres 22, where I referenced a quotation from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρῖναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

Honourable - noble - rather than some abstract or dogmatically defined 'good'. That is, the Hellenic distinction is between good (honourable) personal character and bad (dishonourable) personal character rather than - as for example in Christianity - referencing some abstract, or God-given or dogmatically (Church) defined 'good'.

*entrust solely to.* I follow the MSS, which have μόνῳ, with οὐ μόνῳ being a fairly recently emendation which completely changes the meaning.

*orderly arrangement.* κοσμέω. In esoteric terms, a presencing, on Earth, of the cosmic order itself, qv. Poemandres 8: "having comprehended the logos and having seen the beauty of the cosmic order, re-presented it..."

Regarding 'presencing', qv. my translation of and commentary on section two of the third tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, Ιερός Λόγος:

ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced.

## 2.

*a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings.* κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine.

Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Also, in respect of ἄνθρωπος I have used here - as in my Poemandres - the gender neutral 'human being' instead of the more usual 'man', and also - as there - occasionally used the term 'mortal' when the context suggests it.

Regarding 'the cosmic order' (κόσμος) itself qv. Poemandres 7; 14, and Ιερός Λόγος 4:

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis  
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

*a deathful life and yet a deathless life.* This (including the borrowing of the terms deathful and deathless, in juxtaposition, from Chapman) is explained in section 14 of the Poemandres tractate:

θυητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον.



deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal.

*Logos and Perceiverance.* In my commentary on the Poemandres tractate I have explained my reasons for transliterating (and sometimes capitalizing) λόγος as logos (qv. the commentary on section 5) - rather than as 'Word' or 'Speech' - and for translating νοῦς as perceiverance/perceiveration rather than as the conventional 'mind' (see for example the commentary on sections 2 and 10). Refer also to comments there regarding terms such as pneuma logos (πνευματικὸν λόγον), phasma logos (φωτεινὸς λόγος) and θεοῦ λόγος.

Here Logos suggests 'reasoning', with perceiverance having its usual sense of 'awareness', of comprehending what is perceived, as for example, in being able to rationally or intuitively assess a situation, a person, or persons. As with (and for example) Logos, Psyche, and Physis, perceiverance - capitalized as Perceiverance - can also be personified and thus regarded as a fundamental quality germane to the life of deathful mortals.

### 3.

*whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance.* It is possible to see in this an esoteric allusion to psyche personified, especially given what follows: τοῦτον ἐν μέσῳ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὥσπερ ἄθλον ἰδρυῖσθαι. In ancient mythology - such as the ancient myth of Psyche and Eros, retold by Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses*, which was written around the same time as this Hermetic tractate, and which story also involves Hermes - Psyche initially lacked perceiverance but through striving to succeed in the trials given to her by Aphrodite she acquires it.

Hence why here I have personified both psyche and perceiverance. I have also transliterated ψυχή so as, as I noted in my Poemandres, to not impose a particular meaning on the text. For whether what is meant is anima mundi, or the ancient pagan sense of the 'spark' - the source, or breath - of life, or what we now denote by the terms 'soul' and 'spirit', is open to debate, especially as the terms soul and spirit possess much later and modern connotations that may not be relevant to such an ancient text. Connotations such as suggesting the incorporeal, or immaterial being, as distinct from body or matter; or the Christian concept of the soul.

As an illustration of matters of interpretation, two subtly different senses of ψυχή are evident in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles:

τῶνδε γὰρ πλέον φέρω  
τὸ πένθος ἢ καὶ τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

For my concern for their suffering

Is more than even that for my own psyche.

vv.93-4

ἀλλά μοι δυσμόρῳ γὰρ φθινὰς  
τρύχει ψυχάν, τάδ' εἰ κακοῖς κακὰ  
προσάψει τοῖς πάλαι τὰ πρὸς σφῶν.

But ill-fated would be my breath of life - which the decay in this soil  
Already wears down - if to those troubles of old  
There was joined this trouble between you and him.

vv.665-667

In respect of ψυχή, the Hermetic text here implies that ill-will is associated with those whose nature is such that they lack the ability to rationally or intuitively assess and comprehend a situation or other people.

*father.* ὦ πάτερ is a traditional way of showing respect for an elder, in this case of Thoth for Hermes.

*position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward.* Thus, while Logos is a gift to all mortals from theos, Perceiverance is not and has to be earned, striven for, as an athlete has to strive to earn a prize. [The English word athlete is related to the Greek word used here - ἄθλον - via the Greek ἀθλητής and thence the classical Latin athleta.]

*chaldron.* κρατῆρ. See the Introduction.

*envoy.* While the conventional translation here of κῆρυξ is 'herald', I consider it unsatisfactory given what that English term now often denotes: either the type of herald familiar from the New Testament or the herald of medieval literature and stories (qv. Morte Arthure, and The Knights Tale by Chaucer). Given the Greco-Roman context (Hermes, Thoth) and classical antecedents (such as Hermes as the protector of mortal envoys and messengers) then 'envoy' is more accurate especially given that this is an envoy from the artisan-creator assigned to impart information to mortals.

*Ascend to the one [...] how you came-into-being.* There are similarities here to the Poemandres tractate in relation to the anados - the journey up through the spheres (Poemandres 24) toward theos - and the desire "to apprehend the physis of beings" (Poemandres 3).

*and were immersive with perceiveration.* καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός. That is, were or became characterized by having become immersed with - suffused by -

perceivation.

Here, as elsewhere the understanding of νοῦς as perceivance/perceivation rather than as 'mind' makes the text understandable: for the mortals became suffused with a particular (and, for most, probably a new type of) perception, a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals, and thus acquire a particular type of knowing, whereas an expression such as "immersed themselves with mind" is obscure to the point of being either unintelligible or requiring a long discourse on the nature of "mind" based as such discourses invariably are on certain philosophical assumptions.

The sense of acquiring a new way of seeing the world, themselves, and other mortals is evident in the text that follows: οὔτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως (gained, acquired, partook of, a knowing).

*more complete mortals.* The sense of τέλειος here is not that of being 'perfect' but rather of being 'entire', more completed, 'more rounded', than others. Thus there is no sense of "perfect people" or "perfect humans" - with implied moral, and other, superiority - but rather of those who, having a different perception of things to most others, were akin to initiates of a mystical or an esoteric tradition: apart from others because of that particular knowledge that their new, initiated, perception, has brought, but still mortal. This sense is evident in the text that follows: τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι.

*received the perceivation.* It is possible that this is an allusion to 'the perceivance' - the gnosis - that initiates of a particular mystic or esoteric tradition acquire when certain esoteric, mystic, knowledge is imparted to them.

#### 4.

*declaim to the hearts of mortals.* A figurative usage of 'heart', referring here as often elsewhere in Greek and Hellenic culture to the feelings, the emotions (qv. Iliad, Book IX, 646 and The Odyssey, Book XVII, 489) as well as to the ethos, the nature, and the understanding, of the individual.

See also "with the eyes of the heart" in section 11.

#### 5.

*alertness.* αἴσθησις. For which see Poemandres 1. The sense is that they are always alert, and - like animals - react instinctively because they lack the objective awareness that perceivance (νοῦς) brings and which objective awareness (of themselves and others) makes mortals into complete human beings.

*Confident.* Given the context, πιστεύω here suggests 'confidence' rather than 'belief'; for this is the arrogant instinctive confidence of those who lack

perceiverance and who have no firm belief in anything other than their own bodily pleasure and fulfilling their desires and who thus reject - or who cannot intuit - the numinous perspective of the divine, a perspective which would reveal the possibility of immortality.

*parten to that gift [...] when set against their deeds.* The text suggests that the gift of immortality which theos gives is freely bestowed among those whose deeds reveal that they have understood what the chaldron is and does, with the fourteenth century English word parten [to have something in common with something or someone else] expressing the meaning here of the Greek μετέχω.

*apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly, and what is beyond the Heavens.* An alternative - following the Latin version of the text - omnia complexi sua mente, et terrena et caelestia et si quid est supra caelum - would be "apprehend the terran, the celestial, and what is beyond the celestial."

*(as a) problem.* The context suggests that what is meant is that life before "having so perceived" was a problem, not that it was a 'misfortune' or a calamity. A problem - a challenge - to overcome, which challenge they accepted leading to them gaining the prize, for theos had positioned that prize "half-way between those psyches, as a reward."

The same sense in respect of συμφορά is apparent in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

θεοῖσι μὲν νυν οὐκ ἰσούμενόν σ' ἐγὼ  
οὐδ' οἶδε παῖδες ἐζόμεσθ' ἐφέστιοι,  
ἀνδρῶν δὲ πρῶτον ἔν τε συμφοραῖς βίου  
κρίνοντες ἔν τε δαιμόνων συναλλαγαῖς

Not as an equal of the gods do I,  
And these children who sit by your altar, behold you -  
But as the prime man in our problems of life  
And in our dealings and agreements with daimons.

vv. 31-34

*disembodied.* ἀσώματος - etymologically, a privation of σωματικός - occurs in works by Aristotle and, perhaps more relevant here, in writers such as Iamblichus who in De Mysteriis, V, 16 writes in general terms about the body in relation to offering to the gods and daimons that which, or those things which, might free the body from ailments and bring health, and the necessity in such matters as offerings of not considering the body in either non-bodily or noetic terms:

τότε δὴ οὖν οὐ δῆπου νοερῶς καὶ ἀσωμάτως τὸ σῶμα

μεταχειριζόμεθα· οὐ γὰρ πέφυκε τῶν τοιούτων τρόπων τὸ σῶμα  
μετέχειν· τῶν δὲ συγγενῶν ἑαυτῷ μεταλαγχάνον, σώμασι σῶμα  
θεραπεύεται τε καὶ ἀποκαθαίρεται.

Thus the sense of καταφρονήσαντες πάντων τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἄσωμάτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἓν seems to be that what is important is a striving for the monas not a noetic concern for the difference between whatever is embodied and whatever is considered disembodied.

*Monas.* μονάς. A transliteration since it here does not necessarily, as I noted in the Introduction, signify "The One, The Only" (τὸ ἓν) of such weltanschauungen as those termed Pythagorean, neo-Pythagorean, or Gnostic; or 'the one God' of religious monotheisms such as Christianity.

## 6.

*episteme.* A transliteration of ἐπιστήμη, which could be - and has been - accented thus: épistémé. The meaning is 'a way', or a means or a method, by which something can be known, understood, and appreciated. In this case, perceiviation, which the artisan-creator has positioned "half-way between psyches, as a reward."

Episteme, therefore, should be considered a technical, esoteric, term associated with some of the weltanschauungen that are described in the Corpus Hermeticum. Thus, in the Poemandres tractate, the anados through the seven spheres is an episteme.

*considering the divine.* The MSS have ἐντοπία and various emendations, recent and otherwise, have been proposed including ἐντοπία and ιστορία. Interestingly, the Renaissance Latin text published in 1554 has, for the line, 'scientia mentis est diuinorum contemplatio & intelligentia dei, diuino existente cratere' with Parthey's 1854 edition reading 'mentis scientia, diuinorum inspectio et dei comprehensio, quia diuinus est crater.'

I am inclined toward ιστορία, which conveys the sense here of considering, of obtaining information about - of contemplating - divinity, the numinous, and thus the relation of mortals to divinity. A sense which fits well with the following καὶ ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ κατανόησις.

*For the chaldron is numinous.* θείου ὄντος τοῦ κρατῆρος. For θεῖος here I have opted for the English word numinous (dating from 1647 and from the classical Latin term numen) to express the sense of inclusion - of/from the divinity and of itself being divine - that the word 'divine' by itself does not, particularly given the previous "considering the divine and of understanding divinity."

*Primarily, unless you have a prejudice about the body.* Ἐὰν μὴ πρῶτον τὸ σῶμά σου μισήσης. To always - regardless of textual context and milieu - translate

μισέω/μῖσος as "hate" is or can be misleading, given how the English word hate implies (and is understood as meaning) an extreme personal emotion, an intense personal aversion to something, and also a certain malevolence. Consider, for example, the following from Thucydides:

ἀπὸ τούτου τε πρῶτον Περδίκκας Βρασίδαν τε πολέμιον ἐνόμισε καὶ ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν Πελοποννησίων τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους οὐ ζύνηθες μῖσος εἶχε, τῶν δὲ ἀναγκαίων ξυμφόρων διαναστὰς ἔπρασσε ὅτῳ τρόπῳ τάχιστα τοῖς μὲν ξυμβήσεται, τῶν δὲ ἀπαλλάξεται. (4.128)

His reaching an agreement with the Peloponnesians while at the same time still being determined to be rid of his foe does not imply an implacable, intense, personal hatred in the first place, but rather a generalized dislike (in this case just a certain prejudice) of the kind that can be dispensed with if it is personally - or strategically - advantageous to do so. Thus to translate the relevant part as "it was then that Perdiccas first considered Brasidas his foe and felt a prejudice toward the Peloponnesians" seems apt, especially given the qualification mentioned in the text: τῇ μὲν γνώμῃ δι' Ἀθηναίους.

The preference for the metaphysical, for striving for immortality and for understanding the numinous, that this tractate describes is not, as some have assumed, an ascetic "hatred" of the physical body. Instead, it is just a positive bias in favour of such metaphysical, spiritual matters, and a prejudice against a fixation on bodily and material things.

This preference is also evident in Poemandres 19:

"they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death."

For, as noted in my commentary on τὸν αἴτιον τοῦ θανάτου ἔρωτα in Poemandres 19:

The consensus is, and has been, that ἔρωτα here signifies 'carnal desire' - or something similar - so that it is assumed that what is meant is some sort of ascetic (or Gnostic or puritanical) statement about how sexual desire should be avoided or at the very least controlled. However, this seems rather at variance with the foregoing - regarding propagating and spawning - which inclines me to suggest that what is meant here is 'eros', not necessarily personified as the classical deity (ἡδ' Ἔρος ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων τ' ἀνθρώπων δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν), although the comparison is interesting, but rather as an elemental or archetypal principle, akin to νοῦς and λόγος. Consider, for example, the following from Daphnis and Chloe, written by Longus around the same time as the Corpus Hermeticum: πάντως

γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἔρωτα ἔφυγεν ἢ φεύζεται μέχρις ἂν κάλλος ἦ καὶ ὀφθαλμοὶ βλέπωσιν [Book 1, Proem, 4 - "no one can avoid or has ever been able to avoid Eros, while there is beauty and eyes which perceive"]. In modern terms, few - poetically, metaphorically, none - have avoided or could avoid, at some time in their life, the unconscious power of the anima/animus.

*There are two kinds of existents, bodily and non-bodily.* δύο γὰρ ὄντων τῶν ὄντων. This duality, in respect of mortals, is evident in the Poemandres tractate:

διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον

distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal

(Poemandres 15)

This contrast between the deathful body and the immortality that is possible (the potential for immortality that lies within mortals) is essentially the same as the one described here: the bodily and the divine, the embodied and the disembodied.

7.

*apotheosis of the mortal.* Not here a literal making of "the mortal into a god" or even an actual "deification of the mortal" (by whomsoever) but rather a bringing about in the mortal an apotheosis - ἀποθέωσις - in the sense of an ascension toward immortality, a spiritual journey from earthly life, a figurative resurrection of, or actual elevation in, the life of the mortal.

This latter sense is evident in the use of ἀποθέωσις by Cicero in his Epistularum Ad Atticum - videsne consulatum illum nostrum, quem Curio antea ἀποθέωσιν vocabat, si hic factus erit, fabam mimum futurum (Liber Primus, XVI, 13) - for this early use of the Greek word concerns the elevated rank of Consul, and thus the honour and privileges that such a privileged rank brings.

*a numinous awareness of theos.* In respect of εὐσεβέω as an "awareness of the numinous" qv. my Poemandres, 22.

*termeration.* From the Latin *termere* and thus appropriate here, given the context, in respect of πλημμελέω, suggesting as it can both a violation and a profanation, while avoiding the interpretation that words such as "transgression" (toward god), "trespassed (against god) and "offence" (against god) impute, especially given the usual translations of Christian texts written in

Greek, such as translations of the following from the Septuagint: ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ περὶ ἐνὸς ἀπὸ πάντων ὧν ἐποίησεν καὶ ἐπλημμέλησεν αὐτῷ (Leviticus 5, 26).

*something garish that passes by*. The exact meaning of πομπή here is unclear, with suggestions ranging from parade, pageant, to procession (religious or otherwise), which all seem out of context since they all can have an affect, a purpose, and can achieve things other than just being a hindrance to passers-by.

The context suggests something metaphorical and similar to what Cicero wrote:

quem tu mihi addidisti sane ad illum σύλλογον personam idoneam.  
Videbis igitur, si poteris, ceteros, ut possimus πομπεῦσαι καὶ τοῖς  
προσώποις (Epistularum Ad Atticum, Liber Tertius Decimus, 32:3)

That is, similar to a showy or affected countenance or facade or personae, or an act, or some pompous attempt to impress which however is not effective as in Oedipus Tyrannus:

εἰπὼν ἄπειμ' ὧν οὔνεκ' ἦλθον οὐ τὸ σὸν  
δείσας πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου μ' ὀλεῖς

I shall go but speak that for which I was fetched, with no dread  
Because of your countenance. For you cannot harm me. (448)

*garishly worldly*. I take the sense of κόσμος here to refer to 'that cosmos' - the world of mortals - previously described as "the cosmos of the divine body": the microcosm which the artisan-creator crafted and in which we mortals have our being. See the commentary in section 2 on the phrase *a cosmos of the divine body*.

Hence the poetic metaphor here: garishly worldly. Of living a garish - facile - life in our microcosm even though the artisan-creator has provided a means for us to attain immortality and thus, as described in the Poemandres tractate, become a part of a higher, a divine, cosmic order.

## 8.

*select dishonour* For κακός as 'bad' and 'dishonourable' rather than 'evil' refer to my commentary on Poemandres 22 from which this is an extract:

"The usual translation of κακός here, as often elsewhere, is 'evil'. However, I regard such a translation as unhelpful, given that the English word 'evil' is (1) now often interpreted and understood in a moralistic, preconceived, way according to some theological



dogma/criteria and/or according to some political/social doctrine, and (2) that it does not denote what the classical and the Hellenic term κακός does. Classically understood κακός is what is bad in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or – the opposite of κάλος – what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious [...] When applied to a person, the sense is of a 'rotten' person; someone with bad, harmful, physis; a bad - dishonourable, weak, cowardly - personal character."

*theos blameless in this.* In respect of ἀναίτιος, compare Agamemnon 1505:

ὥς μὲν ἀναίτιος εἶ  
τοῦδε φόνου τίς ὁ μαρτυρήσων

Is there anyone who will bear witness  
That you are blameless in this killing?

*celestial body.* By σῶμα (body) here is meant the celestial body, the 'harmonious structure', which is described in terms of seven spheres in the Poemandres tractate and which mortals must ascend through in sequence in order to attain immortality and thus be in the company of theos. This ascension through the spheres is there described as an anados - ἔτι δέ μοι εἶπε περὶ τῆς ἀνόδου τῆς γυνομένης - with Poemandres (in section 25) describing the journey in detail, with each sphere represented by one of the seven classical planets:

καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν  
μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον  
ἀνενέργητον [...]

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure,  
offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which  
fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no  
longer functioning [...]

Plato, in Timaeus 32c, uses σῶμα to refer to the substance - the body - of the cosmos as being formed from fire, water, air and earth:

ὄν ἀριθμὸν τεττάρων τὸ τοῦ κόσμου σῶμα ἐγεννήθη δι' ἀναλογίας  
ὁμολογήσαν

*sequential constellations.* In context, συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρω suggests a type of movement, a path, through certain stars or constellations. That is, a particular or ordered sequence: the anados through the septenary system, with it being possible that the use here of ἀστήρ (star) - rather than κύκλος (sphere,

orb) as in Poemandres - implied an aural esoteric tradition associating each sphere with a corresponding star or constellation, an ancient tradition found in Renaissance alchemical and magical texts.

*the honourable is unpassable.* Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceiviation," having won that prize gifted by theos.

## 9.

*Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge.* The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

The word translated here as origin is ἀρχή and which Greek term has various philosophical connotations in Anaximander, Plato, et al. What it here denotes, as evident in the text that follows (sections 10 and 11), is origin, beginning, source.

*not the origin of it.* Referring to what is honourable and its origin/beginning.

*hasten upon our journey.* While the text - λαβώμεθα οὖν τῆς ἀρχῆς καὶ ὁδεύσωμεν τάχει ἅπαντα - is somewhat obscure it seems reasonable to assume that what is meant or implied is the necessity of beginning - of hastening upon - the complete, the entire, journey toward the Monas with all that implies in terms of everything encountered along the way.

*not easy.* The sense of σκολιόν here - in the context of leaving what one has become accustomed to and is comfortable with - suggests 'tangled', indirect, 'not straightforward', 'tortuous', and thus 'not easy'.

*elden.* A rather obscure English word meaning 'belonging to earlier times', and used to avoid the negative connotations that words such as 'ancient' can imply.

*What is apparent can please [...] neither pattern nor guise.* τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ. φανερώτερα δὲ ἐστὶ τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανές τοῖς φανεροῖς

This is an interesting passage, often interpreted in terms of moral abstractions, of 'good' and 'evil'. However, as previously mentioned, I incline toward the somewhat iconoclastic view that there is a more Greek, a more Hellenic, and an essentially pagan, interpretation of ἀγαθός consistent with the Greek mystery traditions, with Homer, with the tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles, and with how theos was generally understood in ancient Greece and in Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, times. Which is of ἀγαθός - and of κακός - (i) when referring to mortals as referring to personal character, of character being most often revealed by deeds, by what has been observed because done visibly, or to outward appearance in terms of τὸ καλόν, of what is considered beautiful or not beautiful; and (ii) when used of things - living or dead - as referring to the difference between 'rotten', bad', and what is not rotten, as in a rotten tree or a piece of food.

What is expressed here is of how outward appearances can please, how we can be suspicious - doubtful - about what is concealed, what has not yet been revealed; with what is bad often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a rotten person) but with what is good, honourable, often being concealed because it has no particular pattern or guise until it has been revealed, for example by noble, honourable deeds. Thus the suggestion seems to be that there is or can be a revealing of what is good when mortals seek the theos-gifted prize of perceiversion, which seeking of that prize, and winning it, is of itself a good, a necessary, an honourable, thing to do, leading at it does to a hastening toward the Monas.

The passage also invites comparison with one in Plato's Republic and one in Aristotle's Metaphysics.

In Book XII, 1074b, Aristotle wrote:

τὰ δὲ περὶ τὸν νοῦν ἔχει τινὰς ἀπορίας: δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν  
φαινομένων θειότατον, πῶς δ' ἔχων τοιοῦτος ἂν εἴη, ἔχει τινὰς  
δυσκολίας

The expression δοκεῖ μὲν γὰρ εἶναι τῶν φαινομένων θειότατον has led to disputations among some scholars with some considering the passage corrupt and in need of emendation, for their difficulty lies in Aristotle apparently stating that 'Mind' is, like other phenomena, perceptible to our senses. However, if one does not translate νοῦς as 'Mind' - with all the preconceptions, philosophical and otherwise, that have over centuries become attached to that term - and one also appreciates that φαίνω here as sometimes elsewhere is not a simple 'observing' - of seeing, of observing, phenomena - but rather a revealing, then there is little if any difficulty. For instance, does the following interpretation of part of that passage make sense with respect to phenomena? "Perceiversion, of all revealing, appears to be the most numinous."

Indeed so, because perceiversion is a perception involving a certain

awareness, a revealing to us, of what is observed; that is, an apprehension, and Aristotle's reasoning (insofar as I understand it) is that this awareness - νοῦς - is the most numinous, 'the most divine', revealing because we mortals can apprehended, be or become aware of, and thus have knowledge of, theos. Which is basically what Hermes has in this tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum imparted to Thoth.

In Book VII, 517β - 517ξ, of the Republic, Plato wrote:

τὰ δ' οὖν ἐμοὶ φαινόμενα οὕτω φαίνεται, ἐν τῷ γνωστῷ τελευταία ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα καὶ μόγις ὁρᾶσθαι

Which brings us, again, to ἀγαθός invariably translated as it hitherto has been - in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, and many of the writings of Aristotle and Plato - as an abstraction termed 'good', as well it might be in respect of Plato given that he posits an abstract (a true, ideal) beauty and an abstract (true, ideal) being, as in Phaedo 78b where he writes about αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and about αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν, and why in Symposium 210e - 211a he states regarding his ideal, his form, his ἰδέα/εἶδος, which he sometimes and confusingly uses interchangeably, that:

πρῶτον μὲν ἀεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον

Firstly, it always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay.

What, therefore, seems to have occurred, in respect of this and other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, is the assumption that ἀγαθός always refers back to Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος (and to those influenced by him or are assumed to be his precursors) leading to moralistic interpretations such as that of Mead where ἀγαθός is divorced from the physis (φύσις), the character, the individuality, of mortals: "evils are the more apparent things, whereas the Good can never show Itself unto the eyes, for It hath neither form nor figure." Thus, that in respect of mortals, ἀγαθός, rather than having its genesis, its origin, its very being, in some individual mortals - and attainable by others because of the prize of perceivance offered by theos - is considered as something external which could be attained by, which has its being in, is embodied by, such abstractions (the 'politics') as Plato delineates in his theorized Republic and in such abstractions as were posited by the early Christian Church.

*For it is not possible for what is disembodied to be overtly embodied. ἀδύνατον γὰρ ἀσώματον σώματι φανῆναι.* That is, it is not possible to discern who is honourable from their outward appearance, for what is honourable is manifest, revealed, through personal deeds.

*enfolds every arithmos [...] begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any.* This passage, with its mention of ἀριθμός, is often assumed to refer to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding numbers since ἀριθμός is invariably translated as 'number' - thus implying what the English word implies, especially in mathematical terms - even though Aristotle, in discussing ἀριθμός, wrote: ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶνα (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20).

Given such a necessary distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq - as well as the fact that what ἀριθμός means here, in this tractate, and what it implies - such as the mathematical numbers 2 and 3 developing from the One - is not mentioned, I have transliterated ἀριθμός thus leaving open what it may or may not mean in relation to the particular weltanschauung being described. However, the context seems to suggest a metaphysical rather than an abstract mathematical notion, especially given what follows at the beginning of section 11: πᾶν δὲ τὸ γεννώμενον ἀτελές καὶ διαιρετόν.

*begetting/begotten.* It is interesting to compare the use here of γεννάω (beget/engender) with the use of γέννημα in Poemandres 8 (the birth of Psyche) and 30 (of Logos breeding nobility).

## 11.

*resurgence [...] decline.* The sense here, in context, is not as abstract, as impersonal, as a translation such as "increase and decrease" implies. Rather it suggests "resurgence and decline", as happens with living things.

*what is complete.* The reference is to the Monas.

*eikon of theos.* I have transliterated εἰκὼν as eikon since - for reasons mentioned in my commentary on Poemandres 31 - it implies more, in some ancient mystical tractates, than what the word 'image' now denotes.

*eyes of your heart.* A similar expression occurs in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians - πεφωτισμένους τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς τῆς καρδίας <ὕμῶν> (1.18) - although, as some scholars have noted (qv. Hoehner, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary*, Baker Academic, 2002. p.260f) the Greek syntax there is problematic.

*the path to what is above.* That is, the anados (ἄνοδος) mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, composed as the word ἄνοδος is from ἀνά (above) and ὁδός (path), the two Greek words used here.

*the seeing of it is uniquely your own.* What is being conveyed is that the eikon is of itself mystical - not an ordinary image or painting - and can impart to the

person, who "with the eyes of their heart" views it, something unique, personal, numinous.

*lodestone*. μαγνητὶς λίθος. Lodestone, and not a 'magnet' in the modern sense.

---

**Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ.**

**That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else**

### **Tractate VI**

ooo

#### **Introduction**

The sixth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concentrating as it does on τὸ ἀγαθὸν in relation to theos and mortals, is - in respect of the milieu of ancient Greco-Roman culture - metaphysically interesting even though existing translations, given that they invariably translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the good' and θεός as 'god', impart "the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity." [1]

Since, for reasons explained elsewhere [1], I translate τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' - implying nobility, honour, as expressed for example by Seneca, summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt [2] - and also transliterate θεός as theos, then what emerges from this tractate is something redolent of Greco-Roman mysticism and thus of how τὸ ἀγαθὸν was understood by learned men such as Cicero: in terms of personal character [3] rather than as an impersonal moral abstraction leading as such an abstraction invariably does to dogmatic interpretations and thence to disputations and dissent and thence to the accusations of religious 'heresy' that bedevilled Christian churches for centuries, redolent as such moral abstractions, such dogmatism and accusations, are of an ethos that is rather un-Hellenic.

Such an understanding of τὸ ἀγαθὸν is evident in a passage in section nine of the fourth tractate:

τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει, τὰ δὲ ἀφανῆ δυσπιστεῖν ποιεῖ.  
φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά, τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἀφανὲς τοῖς φανεροῖς.

What is apparent can please us while what is concealed can cause doubt with what is bad often overt while the honourable is often concealed having as it has neither pattern nor guise.

For what is expressed in that fourth tractate is that while what is bad is often outwardly obvious (as in the case of a rotten tree or a bad person) what is good, honourable, is often being concealed because it has no guise, no particular, discernable, pattern - no outward sign or appearance - becoming revealed only though noble, honourable, personal, deeds.

In respect of tractate six, the choice of τὸ ἀγαθὸν as 'the noble' (instead of the conventional 'the good') and κακός as 'bad' (instead of the conventional 'evil') elevates the text from a type of pious sermon to a metaphysical weltanschauung, something especially evident at the beginning of section three:

In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad.

ἐν δὲ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ σύγκρισιν τὸ ἀγαθὸν τοῦ κακοῦ τέτακται τὸ γὰρ μὴ λίαν κακὸν ἐνθάδε τὸ ἀγαθόν ἐστι τὸ δὲ ἐνθάδε ἀγαθόν μόνιον τοῦ κακοῦ τὸ ἐλάχιστον

Also, while the language of this sixth tractate is on occasions somewhat convoluted and apparently contradictory - as for example in the description in section two of Kosmos having nobility (τοῦτον τὸν τρόπον ἀγαθὸς ὁ κόσμος καθὰ καὶ αὐτὸς πάντα ποιεῖ) and yet being not noble in other ways (ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις πᾶσιν οὐκ ἀγαθός) what is expressed metaphysically differs somewhat from some other tractates, revealing just how diverse the pagan mystical traditions represented in the Corpus Hermeticum are.

Despite the differences, most obvious when this tractate - with its rather negative portrayal of mortals and the insistence that beauty and nobility cannot be found in this world - is compared to the Poemandres tractate and the third (Ἱερός Λόγος) tractate, what emerges is a hermetic weltanschauung and one that can best be summarized by the following lines from the last two sections:

"[an] apprehension of theos [is] an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble... [and] a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge [...]"

Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is."

This goes some way toward resolving the apparently contradictory nature of the text, asserting as it does at the beginning that "the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone" and yet also asserting toward the end not only that "if you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble." This is the ethos of a contemplative pagan, and a cultured, mysticism that seems to have been much neglected.

#### Notes

[1] Myatt, David. *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum*.

[2] Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

[3] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum: that honestum (honourable conduct) is its foundation and that it can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia).

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals.

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum - what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθόν - depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses, as does Seneca, the



Greco-Roman view, with a perhaps more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum thus being "the highest nobility."

---

### **Translation**

[1] Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. If so, then it can only be the quidditas of all changement and of geniture since nothing is deserted by it but has about itself a stability of vigour, neither excessive nor lacking, a replenishable provider, there at the origin of all things. When saying the provider to all-things is noble, that nobility always exists, an attribute of theos alone and of no one else.

He is not in need of anything since for him to desire something would be bad. Nothing that has come into being is lost to him, for such loss would be vexing with vexation a division of badness. Nothing is superior to him so as to be an enemy, nor is there a partner who might harm him through him having a passionate desire. Nor any-thing so unheeding of him that he becomes enraged; nor anyone of better judgement to be jealous of.

[2] Because none of those have being in his quidditas then only nobility is left, and since nothing of what is bad is in that quidditas then nothing of what is noble will be found in those other things, since, in all others be they big or small, those things exist, in each of them and also in that living being which is bigger and mightier than them all. For what is begotten is replete with physicality with breeding itself being physical. Yet where physicality is, nobility is not, and where nobility is there is no physicality just as when there is night there is no day. It is impracticable regarding breeding for nobility to be there for that is only of what is not begotten.

But as substance has been assigned to partake of all being so it does of nobility which is how Kosmos has nobility because of the construction done regarding all things, even though not noble in other ways since there is physicality, and changement: the construction of the physical.

[3] In mortals, the noble are arrayed to compare with the bad, for in this place those not especially bad are the noble given that in this place nobility has the smallest portion of the bad. But it is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad, for in this place the noble deteriorate and, deteriorating, become

rotten and no longer noble. Thus the noble is of theos alone or rather it is theos who is the noble one.

Thus it is, Asclepius, that among mortals they are noble in name only and not in the matter itself for that would be impracticable since the physical body cannot hold on to it, restrained on all sides as it is by badness, by toil, by grief, by desire, by rage, by dishonesty, and by unreasonable opinions; and, Asclepius, most ignoble of all, in this place each such thing is believed to be most noble even though unsurpassably bad.

The mistake, the patron of all things rotten, is the absence in this place of nobility.

[4] For myself, I am beholden to theos who has directed my perceivation toward a knowing of nobility; that it is impracticable for it to be in this world replete as it is with badness just as it is with the nobility of theos or as theos is with nobility.

For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas so perhaps revealing that quiddity as certainly unmixed and most refined, and I venture to say, Asclepius, that the quidditas of theos - if he has quidditas - is the beautiful and yet the beautiful and the noble cannot be discerned in the things of the world for everything exposed to the eye are as tenuous depictions, and what is not exposed to it, particularly the beautiful and the noble <...> and since the eye is unable to perceive theos so it is with the beautiful and the noble. For they are intrinsically part of theos, of him alone, belonging to him, unseverable, most fair; loved by theos or by those who love theos.

[5] If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble, the exceptionally radiant, but a radiance surpassed by theos, and with that beauty unequalled with the noble defying imitation, as it is with theos. Such is the apprehension of theos, and thus is there an apprehension of the beautiful and of the noble, and since they are inseparable from theos they cannot be shared among other living beings. Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

[6] Yet those who do not apprehend, who do not follow the path of awareness of the numinous, have the effrontery to declare that mortals are beautiful and noble even though they have not observed, and have no semblance of, what the noble is. Believing that what is bad is noble, they are subsumed by every badness and, thus glutted with it, are fearful of being robbed of it so that they in whatever way fight to not only keep it but to increase it.

Such are, Asclepius, for mortals the beautiful and the noble and from which we are unable to flee or despise. But what is most grievous to bear is that we are unable to live without them.

## Commentary

### Title.

Ὅτι ἐν μόνῳ θεῷ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐστὶν ἀλλαχόθι δὲ οὐδαμοῦ. That In The Theos Alone Is Nobility And Not Anywhere Else.

The consensus is that the title is not original and was added by some scribe.

### 1.

*The noble.* τὸ ἀγαθὸν. As mentioned in the Introduction, I translate ἀγαθός not as some abstract (impersonal) and disputable 'good' but as, and according to context, nobility, noble, honourable.

*no-thing.* In respect of ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν I have here (and occasionally elsewhere) used 'no-thing' - "no entity of any kind" - instead of 'nothing' or 'naught' to emphasize the ontological nature of what is expressed. In addition, as often in the Corpus Hermeticum, what is transliterated here as 'theos' - and by others translated as 'god' - can be taken literally to refer to 'the theos', 'the deity'.

*...theos is, of himself and always, what is noble.* The suggestion of the first sentence seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin of what is noble, and thus the origin of nobility, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

*then it...* Referring to "what is noble".

*quidditas.* οὐσία. Here, a more appropriate translation of οὐσία - instead of 'essence' or 'substance' - is quidditas, as in tractate XI:2: "it is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful..."

As I noted in my commentary on XI:2,

Quidditas – post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity – is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For physis is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

One interpretation of quidditas here is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presenced in - and perceived via or as - physis.

*changeament...geniture.* κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως. cf. tractate XI:2 and my note above regarding οὐσία. As mentioned in my commentary on XI:2, "the unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

*nothing that has come into being.* In respect of τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 191a27f: φασιν οὔτε γίνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων οὐδέν οὔτε φθείρεσθαι, διὰ τὸ ἀναγκαῖον μὲν εἶναι γίνεσθαι τὸ γιγνόμενον ἢ ἐξ ὄντος ἢ ἐκ μὴ ὄντος.

*lost.* ἀπόλλυμι. qv. the title of tractate VIII, and my note regarding it.

*bad...badness.* κακός, κακίας. As with ἀγαθός not some moral impersonal disputable abstraction - in this case 'evil' - but the personal sense of some-thing or someone being bad, rotten, ignoble.

*a partner who might harm him.* Literally, "a partner to be harmed by." The exact nature of this partnership is not specified, although the following καὶ διὰ τοῦτο αὐτοῦ ἐρασθήσεται indicates a certain scenario. I have omitted the editorial emendation of οὔτε κάλλιον - "nothing is as beautiful."

*nothing of what is bad.* Reading κακῶν with the MSS and not the emendation ἄλλων.

*physicality.* Given the context - ἐν τοῖς καθ' ἐν καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ τῷ ζῶντι τῷ πάντων μερίζοντι καὶ δυνατωτάτῳ - here πάθος, παθῶν, παθητῆς suggest a physicality, a physical actuality/occurrence, which the English word 'passion', with its often implicit anthropomorphism, does not quite express.

The author, in these first two sections, is making a distinction between their hermetic concept of theos and other living beings, especially mortals; of theos as detached from all those things - such as physicality, jealousy, anger - which mortals are subject to and with theos as described here is thus not only very different from the vengeful, angry, Jehovah of the Old Testament but also quite similar to, if not in perhaps some manner based on, the Hellenic concept as mentioned by Aristotle:

ὥστε ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια, μακαριότητι διαφέρουσα, θεωρητικὴ ἂν εἴη:  
καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δὴ ἡ ταύτη συγγενεστάτη εὐδαιμονικωτάτη.  
σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα εὐδαιμονίας.  
*Nicomachean Ethics* (Book X) 1178b.22

Therefore the activity of theos, excelling others in bliss, is wordless-awareness [θεωρέω] and the nearest thing to that among mortals arises from good-fortune [εὐδαιμονία].

*construction.* cf. tractate II, ὁ οὖν θεὸς <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατρὸς γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

*not noble in other ways.* That is, while Kosmos - qv. tractate XI for what or who this Kosmos may be - has nobility by the act of construction, of forming substance into beings, because some of those beings possess physicality then Kosmos unlike theos is not completely noble.

### 3.

*in this place.* I incline toward the view that ἐνθάδε here does not refer, as some have conjectured, to "here below" (qv. Plato, Gorgias, 525b: ὅμως δὲ δι' ἀλγηδόνων καὶ ὀδυνῶν γίνεται αὐτοῖς ἡ ὠφελία καὶ ἐνθάδε καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου) but rather just to "this place, here."

*refine.* καθαροῖς. cf. Poemandres 10, and 22. As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

Literally [καθαροῖς] means 'physically clean', often in the sense of being in a state of ritual purification: qv. the inscription on one of the ancient tablets (totenpasse) found in Thurii - ἔρχομαι ἐκ καθαρῶν καθαρὰ χθονίων βασίλεια ("in arrivance, purified from the purified, mistress of the chthonic"). Since the English word 'pure' is unsuitable given its connotations - religious, sanctimonious, political, and otherwise - I have opted for the not altogether satisfactory 'refined'.

Here however, the choice of refine seems apposite, given the text:

ἀδύνατον οὖν τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐνθάδε καθαρεύειν τῆς κακίας

It is impractical in this place to refine the noble from the bad

This makes perfect (and practical) sense, in contrast to the fairly recent, conventional, and somewhat moralistic translation of Copenhaver: "the good cannot be cleansed of vice here below."

Interestingly, the Greek word καθαροῖς formed the basis for the relatively modern (c.1803) English term 'catharsis'.

*physical body.* cf. Poemandres 24: ἐν τῇ ἀναλύσει τοῦ σώματος τοῦ ὕλικου παραδίδως αὐτὸ τὸ σῶμα εἰς ἀλλοίωσιν (the dissolution of the physical body allows that body to be transformed).

*restrained on all sides.* παντόθεν ἐσφιγμένον.

*each such thing.* This might well be a reference to "restrained on all sides as it is by badness" - to bad things in general - and not to the immediately preceding "toil, grief, desire, rage, dishonesty, and unreasonable opinion."

*the patron of all things rotten.* I have omitted the very odd reference to "gluttony" - ἡ γαστριμαργία - which follows τὸ μᾶλλον ἀνυπερβλήτον κακόν, as in all probability it is a gloss. Nock, in his text, indicates a lacuna between the following χορηγὸς and ἡ πλάνη.

If the reference to gluttony is not omitted then a possible interpretation of the text would be: "Gluttony is the patron of all things rotten <...> the mistake in this place is the absence of nobility."

#### 4.

*or as theos is with nobility.* In order to try and express in English something of the meaning of the Greek - and to avoid repeating "replete" (πλήρωμά), which repetition is not in the Greek text - I have slightly amended the word order. Nock indicates a lacuna between ἀγαθὸν τοῦ θεοῦ and αἱ γὰρ ἔξοχαί. The

transition between "replete with" and "the beautiful" is certainly abrupt.

*For the eminence of the beautiful is around that quidditas.* Although the Greek text here is rather obscure and various emendations have been proposed - none of which are entirely satisfactory - the general sense, of the beautiful surrounding or being near to the quidditas (οὐσία) of theos, seems clear.

*tenuous depictions.* The Greek words εἶδωλον and σκιαγραφία require careful consideration if one is not to read into the text philosophical meanings from other ancient authors which may not be relevant here, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose the word 'image'. In addition, if the English word chosen has other, perhaps more modern, associations then there may well be a 'retrospective re-interpretation' of the text, reading into it a meaning or meanings which also might not be relevant, as might be the case in respect of εἶδωλον if one chose 'phantom' given what that word now often imputes. Hence I have chosen 'tenuous' and 'depiction' respectively.

*particularly the beautiful and the noble.* Some text is missing in the MSS so that what follows οὐδὲ τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν unfortunately remains unknown.

5.

*quest.* The sense of ζητέω here is more than that of a simple 'inquiry' or an 'asking'. It is to 'seek after' something with an earnest purpose, as in Matthew 2:13 where there is a desire by Herod to seek out and kill the infant Jesus:

Ἀναχωρησάντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου φαίνεται κατ' ὄναρ τῷ Ἰωσήφ λέγων· ἐγερθεὶς παράλαβε τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ φεῦγε εἰς Αἴγυπτον καὶ ἴσθι ἐκεῖ ἕως ἄν εἴπω σοι· μέλλει γὰρ Ἡρώδης ζητεῖν τὸ παιδίον τοῦ ἀπολέσαι αὐτό.

*awareness of the numinous.* As I noted in my commentary on Poemandres 22:

As with ὁσίους, εὐσεβέω is a difficult word to translate, given that most of the English alternatives - such as reverent, pious - have acquired, over centuries, particular religious meanings, often associated with Christianity or types of asceticism. The correct sense is 'aware of the numinous', and thus imbued with that sense of duty, that sense of humility - or rather, an awareness of their human limitations - which makes them appreciate and respect the numinous in whatever form, way, or manner they appreciate, feel, intuit, apprehend, or understand, the numinous, be it in terms of the gods, the god, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, God, or whatever. It is this awareness which inclines a person toward 'respectful deeds'.

6.

*semblance*. Here, ὄναρ suggests 'semblance' rather than 'dream'.

ooo

## Appendix

### Concerning Personal Pronouns

Regarding the interpretation of ancient texts - of translating an ancient language into English - there is the matter of personal pronouns with the convention being to default to the masculine singular (Man, his, he) even when the gender is not specified but only assumed, as in the matter of θεός in the sixth tractate where unlike some other tractates (such as Poemandres and tractate VIII) the term πατήρ does not occur.

Thus, conventionally defaulting to the masculine singular in sections 12 and 13 of tractate XI of the Corpus Hermeticum - based on the assumption that the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων [1] and the title πρόδρομος refer to a man - one translates as:

He creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things. [2]

πάντα οὖν αὐτὸς ποιεῖ [...] εἰ γὰρ ἀποδέδεικται μηδὲν δυνάμενον εἶναι, πόσω μᾶλλον ὁ θεός; εἰ γὰρ τί ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ποιεῖ, ὃ μὴ θέμις εἰπεῖν, ἀτελής ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μήτε ἀργός ἐστι, τέλειος δέ, ἄρα πάντα ποιεῖ.

However, if one uses the plural - non-gender specific - "they" as a personal pronoun then one has:

"They create all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything they have not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - they are incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then they create all things."

Which somewhat changes the meaning and is perhaps confusing for some, although the non-literal alternatives of "the theos" or "the divinity" are rather cumbersome:



"The divinity creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for the divinity? If there is anything the divinity has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - the divinity is incomplete, while if the divinity is complete and not otiose then the divinity creates all things."

An alternative would be the neutral if even more cumbersome phrase "that Being":

"That Being creates all things [...] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for that Being? If there is anything that Being has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - that Being is incomplete, while if that Being is complete and not otiose then that Being creates all things."

As I noted in my commentary on the phrase ἀναγνωρίσας ἑαυτὸν in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, given that in that tractate theos is not only referred to using the ancient honorific πατήρ [3] but also described as ἀρρενόθηλος, as both male and female:

"here, as often elsewhere, I have gone against convention (grammatical and otherwise) by, where possible, choosing neutral personal pronouns, thus avoiding sentences such as "And he who has self-knowledge..." This sometimes results in using third person plural pronouns - such as 'their' and 'they' - as if they were personal pronouns, or using constructs such as "the one of self-knowledge" or "whoever has self-knowledge". [2]

While I have in my translation here of tractate six used the conventional default of the masculine singular pronoun it might be an interesting exercise for those interested to provide a version using, where appropriate, gender-neutral personal pronouns, which undoubtedly would result in an interpretation of the text quite different from other translations available, my own included.

ooo

[1] Nock - *Corpus Hermeticum*, Third Edition, 1972 - has the emendation ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος.

[2] Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum I, III, IV, VIII, XI*. 2017.

[3] cf. τοῦ πατρὸς τῶν φώτων (Epistle of James, I, 17), "the father of phaos". In respect of phaos, qv. Poemandres 4-6; tractate III, 1 (φῶς ἅγιον), and tractate XI, 7.

---

**Ὅτι οὐδὲν τῶν ὄντων ἀπόλλυται  
ἀλλὰ τὰς μεταβολὰς ἀπωλείας καὶ θανάτους πλανώμενοι λέγουσιν**

That no beings are lost,  
despite mortals mistakenly claiming that such transformations are death and a loss.

### **Tractate VIII**

ooo

#### **Introduction**

The eighth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, concise as it is, provides an interesting summary of some of the tenets of the Hermetic weltanschauung. As, for example, in the mention of a first being (the primary theos) and of a second being (a theos) who is an eikon (εἰκὼν) of the first, and which first being - theos - is the artisan of all beings; and as, for example, in the mention of mortals having a natural empathy (συμπάθεια) with this eikon, this second being, who is identified as κόσμος, with κόσμος understood here, as in tractate XI, either as a personification, as a divinity, the theos - a deathless living being, ζῶον ἄθνατον - who is the living cosmic order, or, as in the Poemandres tractate as simply referring in an impersonal manner to 'the cosmic order' itself.

While most other translators have opted here, as in other tractates, to translate κόσμος as cosmos (which English term suggests that the physical universe is meant) I incline toward the view that here - as in tractate XI - a divinity is meant, especially given how κόσμος is described: as "a second theos and a deathless living being," and as an eikon of the primary theos.

There are certain parallels with tractate XI and in which tractate it is stated that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible," (section 15) and, in section 14, that "Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of what was joined but the end of enosis."

What therefore emerges from this, the eighth, tractate are two things: how we mortals are part of, and connected to, Kosmos and thence - since Kosmos is an eikon - to the first, the primary, theos, and how diverse the Hermetic weltanschauung is in respect of some details while nevertheless retaining an

underlying ethos.

ooo

### **Translation**

[1] It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that, my son, we now must speak: of why psyche is deathless and how its vigour assembles and separates the corporeal. For there is no death of what-is, only an apprehension grounded in the denotatum 'deathless', either through unavailing toil or, by discarding the important part, that what is called deathless is deathful. That is, for the deathful there is a loss. But nothing of the Kosmos is ever lost, for if Kosmos is a second theos and a deathless living being then it is not possible for any portion of such a deathless living being to be lost since all beings of Kosmos are part of Kosmos, as most certainly are mortals, the noetic living being.

[2] In truth, the first is theos; the eternal, unborn. The second was engendered from, nurtured by, that being and rendered deathless and eikon of that being, as by an everlasting father, never-dying because deathless.

For never-dying is unlike everlasting. For that one was not a bringing-into-being by another although if there was a bringing-into-being it was his own bringing-into-being since he is always a bringing-into-being. For the everlasting - because it is everlasting - is all that is, with the father everlasting because of himself while Kosmos became everlasting and deathless because of the father.

[3] And the father endowed such substance as he gathered, extending it all to create something spherical, conferring upon it a particular quality, deathless and of substance everlasting. Having seeded such qualities and replete with semblances, the father enclosed them in the sphere as if in a cavern. His deliberation was to equip with each quality what would follow; to encompass with deathlessness everything corporeal so that substance would not by thesis be separated from that bringing-together to thereby dissolve into its own disorder.

For when, my son, substance was incorporeal it was disordered even though that was restricted to other smaller qualities, to the kind of increase and decrease that mortals name death.

[4] For such disorder occurs with earthly-living beings, with celestial beings having one order allotted to them by the father from the beginning and maintained from disintegration by the periodicity of each of them, while the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together

and of the indissoluble corporeal; that is, of the deathless. Thus there is the loss of those influencing impressions and not the destruction of what is embodied.

[5] Now, as to the third living being, mortals, brought-into-being as eikon of Kosmos and who, because of the deliberations of the father and beyond the other living beings on Earth, have perceivance and also empathy with the second theos and perception of the first.

For of the one there is apprehension as of the corporeal, while of the other there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and as of a noble perceivance.

Then this life is not lost?

Speak softly, my son, and apprehend who theos is, who Kosmos is, what a deathless living being is, what a dissoluble living being is, and apprehend also that Kosmos is of theos and within theos and that mortals are of Kosmos and within Kosmos and thus that theos is the origin of, encompasses, and constitutes, everything.

ooo

## Commentary

### Title.

*lost.* ἀπόλλυμι. Lost, rather than 'destroyed' or 'perished'. They are not 'lost' because beings - entities/things - once brought-into-being - are still emanations of Being, of theos, even if their presencing, their form, is changed, transformed, morphed, as happens for example with those mortals who, via the anados mentioned in the Poemandres tractate, go beyond the seven spheres to, and then beyond, the ogdoadic physis.

### 1.

*corporeal.* σῶμα. Here, the context - qv. for example the following τῶν γὰρ οὐρανίων τὰ σώματα μίαν τάξιν ἔχει in section 4 and τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἄσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in section 5 - suggests corporeal rather than a literal body. A subtle distinction, between "of the nature of matter" and a specific type of "physical body". Compare also the fourth tractate: ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ

πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα· τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλω τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον.

*vigour*. ἐνέργεια. qv. Poemandres 14, tractate XI: 2, etcetera.

*assembles*. σύστασις. cf. Euripides, *Andromache*, 1088: τοῦθ' ὑποπτον ἦν ἄρ' ἐς δὲ συστάσεις κύκλους τ' ἐχώρει λαὸς οἰκήτωρ θεοῦ.

In Poemandres 10 it is mentioned how "the logos of theos bounded to the fine artisements of Physis and joined with the perceiviation of that artisan." Thus a theme shared by several tractates is how the various 'artisans' of theos - and theos - skillfully craft beings from Being, as in tractate IV, Chaldron or Monas:

Επειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

*apprehension*. νόημα. cf. Poemandres 3, "I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings."

*denotatum*. For προσηγορία. In this case, the denotatum - the naming - is the word 'deathless'.

*or by discarding the important part [...] what is called deathless is deathful*. ἢ κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος λεγόμενος θάνατος ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀθάνατος. Literally, "by discarding the first letter it is called θάνατος [deathful] instead of ἀθάνατος [deathless].

Regarding τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος, what seems to be implied is that the mortal apprehension of 'deathless' does not include the most important - the correct - apprehension regarding death, which correct apprehension is explained by what follows.

*Kosmos*. κόσμος. As at Poemandres 7, κόσμος carries with it the suggestion that the cosmos is an ordered structure. However, here I construe κόσμος, as in tractate XI, as a divinity, the theos who is the living, deathless, cosmic order.

*the noetic living being*. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶον. The word λογικός imputes the sense of both the faculty of speech and the faculty of thought, something well-expressed by Sophocles: φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο

καὶ δυσαύλων πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη παντοπόρος,  
(Antigone, 355f).

2.

*artisan of all beings.* In respect of artisan (δημιουργόν) cf. Poemandres 9, and tractate IV: 1. Regarding "of all beings", cf. Poemandres 31, ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὅλων.

*eikon.* εἰκὼν, qv. Poemandres 21 and 31, and tractate XI:15. Thus the suggestion is that is this eikon represents - presences, manifests - theos, the artisan.

*never-dying...everlasting.* In order to try and express the dissimilarity between ἀείζωος and αἰδῖος I have translated the former as never-dying (a sense suggested by ἀείζων ὡς ἀθάνατος) and the latter as everlasting, a dissimilarity that is not immediately apparent from translations such as "the everliving is different from the eternal."

*That one.* Referring to 'the first' who engendered Kosmos as eikon.

*not a bringing-into-being by another ... always a bringing-into-being.* The text - with its repetition of ἐγένετο - is somewhat obscure, and various emendations have been proposed, none of which are entirely satisfactory. The sense seems to be of "that one" - the first - always having been, and is, and always will be, "a coming-into-being".

3.

*such substance ... particular quality.* The text is quite obscure and several emendations have been suggested, with Nock indicating that some text may be missing after τῷ ἑαυτοῦ, although ὑπ' αὐτόν seems reasonable. Any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

The sphere may refer to Kosmos, cf. Poemandres 9,

"Theos, the perceiviation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceiviation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate."

The suggestion might thus be that these seven spheres are themselves enclosed within a sphere, which might explain Poemandres 13-14, "Having fully learned their essence, and having partaken of their physis, he was determined to burst out past the limit of those spheres [and] with full authority over the ordered

cosmos of humans and of beings devoid of logos, he burst through the strength of the spheres to thus reveal to those of downward physis the beautiful image of theos."

*substance.* ὕλη, qv. Poemandres 19, tractate III:1, tractate XI:3.

*create.* ποιέω, qv. tractate XI:5

*semblances.* Does ἰδέα here equate with the concept of 'form' as described by Plato? The consensus is that it does, even though such an assumption imposes a specific philosophical meaning on the text and even though the cosmogonic context - of the living Kosmos as eikon, of Kosmos made deathless by the father, and of theos, the father, conferring upon the sphere a particular quality - does not seem to support such an abstract, definite, concept. Thus, to avoid imposing a very particular meaning on the text, and given that the hermeticism described in this and in the other tractates represent varied weltanschauungen (albeit having a similar underlying ethos) rather than one well-defined philosophy, I have translated not as 'forms' but as semblances.

*as if in a cavern.* Does this refer to Plato's allegory of the cave, as so many seem to have assumed? Probably not, since - to give just one example - in the Βιβλιοθήκη of Pseudo-Apollodorus - written around the same time as this tractate - ἐν ἄντρῳ refers to a cave, or cavern, in which Maia, one of the seven Pleiades, gave birth to Hermes: Μαῖα μὲν οὖν ἡ πρεσβυτάτη Διὶ συνελθοῦσα ἐν ἄντρῳ τῆς Κυλλήνης Ἑρμῆν τίκτει. οὗτος ἐν σπαργάνοις ἐπὶ τοῦ λίκνου κείμενος.

*deliberation.* qv. Poemandres 8. As with the preceding *such substance ... particular quality*, the text here is quite obscure, and any translation - whatever emendation is accepted - is conjectural.

*thelesis.* θέλησις, qv. tractate IV:1. As noted in the commentary there, a transliteration to suggest something more metaphysical than a human type wish or desire. Such as that the physis - the being - of substance (ὕλη) might be such that without the intervention of theos it might naturally dissolve into disorderliness (ἀταξία).

#### 4.

*one order allotted to them.* That is, celestial beings - those resident in and of the heavens - have a particular order distinct from that of ordinary mortals, but which order mortals can, via an anados such as described in the Poemandres tractate, journey to, discover, and become a part of.

*the periodicity of earthly living beings is of a separation of their bringing together and of the indissoluble corporeal.* While the periodicity of celestial beings is unchanging and is maintained from disintegration, the periodicity of

mortals is varied and involves the cycle, the separation, of life and death and yet also involves the reality of death not being an end - since what is deathless, the indissoluble part of what is corporeal, cannot suffer from disintegration.

*influencing impressions.* αἰσθήσεις. qv. Poemandres 22, and my commentary thereon, for what is meant is not simply 'the [bodily] senses' nor what is perceptible to or perceived by the senses but rather those particular impressions, conveyed by the senses, which may influence a person in a particular way.

*what is embodied.* The indissoluble part of what is apprehended as corporeal.

5.

*perceiverance.* νοῦς. Not 'mind', qv. Poemandres 2, tractate III:1, etcetera. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 2:

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceiverance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceiverance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action.

*empathy.* συμπάθεια.

*perception.* cf. Poemandres 18. An apprehension of the numinous, and thus of theos, of Kosmos as eikon, and so on.

*there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and of a noble perceiverance.* This refers to 'the first', to theos, the father; with the preceding "apprehension as of the corporeal" referring to 'the second', that is, to Kosmos.

Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22. and especially the commentary on φανερώτερα δέ ἐστι τὰ κακά τὸ δὲ ἀγαθὸν ἄφανές τοῖς φανεροῖς in tractate IV:9.

Thus theos is apprehended - understood, felt - in the same, mystical, numinous, way not only as the incorporeal is, but also as inherently noble.



*Speak softly.* εὐφήμησον. qv tractate XI:22.

(Kosmos is ...) within theos. ἐν τῷ θεῷ. Literally, 'within the theos'.

---

**Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν**

**From Perceivance To Hermes**

**Tractate XI**

The eleventh tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum is particularly interesting for two reasons. First, the cosmogony in which Aion, Kronos, and Sophia feature. Second, possible links to the Poemandres tractate, given - for example - the mention of a septenary system and the supposition that Perceivance - νοῦς - who addresses Hermes Trismegistus may well be Poemandres himself.

As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus Hermeticum, I here transliterate certain Greek words, such as theos, in order to avoid what I have described as 'retrospective re-interpretation'.

ooo

**Translation**

[1] Take account of this discourse, Hermes Trismegistus, remembering what is said for I shall not refrain from mentioning what occurs to me.

Because there is much difference among the many who speak about theos and all other things, I have not uncovered the actuality. Therefore, my Lord, make it unambiguous for me, for you are the one I trust in this.

[2] Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

The vigour of theos is perceivration and Psyche; but of Aion: continuance and exemption from death; of Kosmos, a cyclic return and renewal; of Kronos, growth and abatement; of geniture, capability. Aion, thus, is of theos; Kosmos of Aion; Kronos of Kosmos; and geniture of Kronos.

[3] The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

[4] For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivration, with perceivration presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivration and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

[5] Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine.

Therefore, Hermes, never presume that what is above or below is similar to theos since you will descend down from actuality. For nothing is similar to that which, as the one and only, has no similitude. Never presume that he would delegate his work to someone else, for who else is the cause of life, of exemption from death, of Changement? What else but create?

Theos is not inactive for otherwise everything would be inactive; instead they are replete with theos, and there is nowhere in the cosmos nor anywhere else where there is inaction. Inactive is thus a vacant nomen in regard to a creator and what is brought into being.

[6] For every being there is a coming-into-being, each one in balance with its place, with the creator in all that exists, not found in just some nor creating only some but everything. His craft is in what he creates so that their coming-into

being is not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him.

ooo

Correctly consider and observe Kosmos as suggested by me and thus the beauty thereof, a body undecayable and nothing more eldern and yet always vigorous and fresh, even more now than before.

[7] Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos.

The Moon, prodomus of all of those, an instrument of Physis, of the changement of the substance below - with the Earth amid them all, a settled foundation of the beautiful Kosmos - and nourisher and nurturer of those on Earth.

Consider also the numerous deathless, and just how many, as well as deathful lives there are. And amid both the deathless and the deathful, the travelling Moon.

[8] All are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth, with those on the right not toward to the left and those on the left not toward the right, not those above to below nor below to above. That all have come-into-being you do not, dear Hermes, have to learn from me, for they have bodies, psyche, motion, and to meld them into one is not possible without someone to bring them together. Such a one must exist and be, in every way, a unity.

[9] For, given dissimilar objects, motion is different and diverse with one hastiness appointed to them all, and thus it is not possible for there to be two or more creators for if there are many then such an arrangement cannot be kept. For the result of many is strifeful emulation of the stronger, and if one of two was the creator of changeable mortal living beings they would covet creating deathless ones even as the creator of the deathless would deathful ones.

If indeed there were two with one substance and the other psyche who would provide the creations? If both of them, which would have the larger part?

[10] Consider that every living being, deathful and deathless, and whether devoid of logos, is formed of substance and psyche, for all living beings presence life while the non-living are substance only. Similarly, psyche of itself from its creator is the cause of the living while the cause of all life is the creator of deathless beings.

What then of the living that die and the deathless ones? For why does the deathless one who creates deathless beings not create other living beings so?

[11] It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presenced is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

[12] He creates all beings, and how supreme it is for the theos to create life and psyche and the deathless and changement, with you doing so many things, for you see, hear, speak, smell, touch, walk, perceive, and breathe. Yet it is not someone else who is seeing and another who is hearing and another who is speaking and another who is touching and another who is hearing and another who is smelling and another who is walking and another who is perceiving and another who is breathing, but one being doing all such things.

None of which are separate from theos. Just as you are not really living if you are otiose so would theos, if otiose - and it is not the custom to say this - no longer be theos.

[13] If it is demonstrated that no one really exists without producing something how much more so for theos? If there is anything he has not created then - although it is not the custom to say this - he is incomplete, while if theos is complete and not otiose then he creates all things.

For a little longer, Hermes, give way to me and you will more readily apprehend that the work of theos is one: of everything brought-into-being; what is coming-into-being, what has come-into-being, and what will come-into-being. This, my friend, is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos.

[14] If you maintain this should be apprehended in deeds, consider when you seek to procreate, for it not the same for him since there is no delight, no colleague. Instead, a working alone, and forever working for he is what he creates. If ever isolated from it, everything would - because of Necessitas - fall apart, with everything dying because there would be no Life. But if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. While if everything is alive, and Life is One, then theos is One. Also, if everything is alive both in the heavens and on Earth and Life is One for them all as brought-into-being by theos and theos is that, then all are brought-into-being by theos.

Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of

what was joined but the end of enosis.

[15] Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos that of Aion, the Sun that of Aion, and mortals that of the Sun. It is said that changelement is death since the body disintegrates with life departing to the unperceptible. My dear Hermes, while I state there is changelement in Kosmos because every day portions of it come-into-being in the unperceptible, it never disintegrates. These are the occurrences of the Kosmos, cyclicity and occultations; the cyclic a turning and occultation renewal.

[16] The Kosmos is polymorphous and forms are not imposed on it but rather, within itself, it is such changelement. Since the Kosmos is polymorphous who created it and who would that be? Whomsoever cannot be without-form and yet if polymorphous would be akin to Kosmos and if only one form would be lower than Kosmos.

What therefore can be said without confusion given that there should be no confusion concerning apprehending theos? If there is a kind then it is a singular kind, incorporeal, and not subject to perception but revealed through the corporeal.

[17] And do not wonder about an incorporeal kind since it is akin to words, mountains which appear in depictions to be rugged but which when examined are flat and smooth. So heed these words of mine bold as they are but honest, for as mortals cannot be separate from Life, theos cannot be separate from creating nobility since for theos this creating is Life and motion, the movement of everything and the giving of life.

[18] Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

[19] And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered

system - then it is possible for you.

[20] Thus see how much might and swiftness you have. If you can do all those things then cannot theos? In such a manner you should consider theos as having all - Kosmos, The Entirety - as purposes within himself. For until you compare yourself with theos you cannot apprehend theos because what is similar can understand the similar.

Extend yourself greatly, immeasurably; leap beyond every body, surpass Kronos, become Aion, and you can apprehend theos. Having supposed that for you there is nothing that is not possible, regard yourself as deathless, capable of apprehending everything: every craft, all learning, the nature of every living being. Become elevated above every elevation, deeper than every depth. Gather within yourself awareness of every creation; of Fire and Water; the Dry and the Moist; and jointly be at all places on land, at sea, in the heavens. Be not yet born; in the womb; young; old; having died; what is beyond death.

And if you apprehend all that together - durations, places, occurrences, quality, quantity - you will be capable of apprehending theos.

[21] But if you enclose your psyche in your body and lessen it, saying "I comprehend nothing; have no power; fear the sea; am unable to go up into the heavens; do not know who I was and cannot know what I will be," then what is there with you and also with the god?

For, indulging the body and rotten, you are unable to apprehend the beautiful, the noble. To be completely rotten is to be unaware of the numinous, while having the ability to discover, to have volition, to have expectations, is the direct, the better - its own - way to nobility, and which you will encounter everywhere and which will everywhere be perceived whether you anticipate it or not: awake, asleep, at sea; whether journeying by night, by day, when speaking or when silent. For there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos.

[22] Do you affirm that theos is unperceived?

Speak softly. Who is more clearly revealed? He created everything such that in them you might discern him, for such is the nobility, such is the arête, of the theos, that he is revealed in everything. For nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with perceivability evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

So Trismegistus, let what has been revealed so far be apprehended by you, and if you consider other things in the same way you will not be deceived.

## Commentary

### Title.

*perceivance*. νοῦς. qv. my commentary on the term in Poemandres where I wrote:

"The conventional interpretation [of νοῦς] is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Poemandres [...]

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is *perceivance*; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceivance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action."

### 1.

The first paragraph of this section is spoken by Perceivance [Νοῦς], the second by Hermes Trismegistus.

*theos*. As with my translations of tractates I, III, and IV of the Corpus

Hermeticum, I here transliterate θεός rather than translate as God (as most others do) which translation in my opinion imposes a particular and Christian interpretation on the text given two thousand years of Christian exegesis regarding both God and the Old and New Testaments. A suitable alternative to 'theos' might be 'the god', which emphasizes that the theos described in this tractate is, like Zeus in classical times, the pre-eminent divinity. Occasionally, when the text warrants it - for example τῷ θεῷ and εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός - I have used 'the theos' instead of theos.

*I have not uncovered the actuality.* ἐγὼ τὸ ἀληθές οὐκ ἔμαθον. I incline toward the view that the sense of ἀληθής here is not some abstract (disputable) 'truth' but rather of the reality, the actuality, beyond the conflicting views, beyond appearance, and thus of uncovering - of learning - the reality of theos and other things.

## 2.

*Aion.* αἰών. A transliteration since the usual translation of 'eternity' imposes modern (cosmological and theological) meanings on the text, especially as αἰών can also imply a personification of a 'divine being', and 'an age or era' of long duration, or the lifespan of a mortal (as in Herodotus: πρὶν τελευτήσαντα καλῶς τὸν αἰῶνα πύθωμαι, Book 1, 32.5). In Aristotle, αἰών has specific meanings which the English term 'eternity' does not describe. For instance, in Περὶ Οὐρανοῦ where he writes: Ὅτι μὲν οὖν οὔτε γέγονεν ὁ πᾶς οὐρανὸς οὔτ' ἐνδέχεται φθαρῆναι, καθάπερ τινὲς φασιν αὐτόν, ἀλλ' ἔστιν εἷς καὶ αἰδίος, ἀρχὴν μὲν καὶ τελευτὴν οὐκ ἔχων τοῦ παντὸς αἰῶνος, ἔχων δὲ καὶ περιέχων ἐν αὐτῷ τὸν ἄπειρον χρόνον (Book 2, 1).

Which is somewhat echoed in this tractate in respect of Kosmos which is not just a coming-into-being but always just *is*, from Aion (γενόμενος οὔποτε καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος).

Interestingly, Jung used the term to describe a particular archetype, one which provides "intimations of a kind of enantiodromian reversal of dominants" as he writes in his *Aion: Researches Into The Phenomenology Of The Self*.

In addition, αἰών - as with the following χρόνος - might well be a personification, or an esoteric/philosophical term or principle which requires interpretation, as might κόσμος (Kosmos). Since κόσμος here does not necessarily imply what we now understand, via sciences such as astronomy, as the physical cosmos/universe it seems inappropriate to translate it as 'the cosmos', especially given expressions such as οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

*Kronos.* χρόνος. For reasons I have explained many times in my writings (for instance in Appendix I), I do not translate χρόνος as 'time', which translation seems to me to impose a particular modern meaning on the text given that for



centuries the term 'time' has denoted a certain regularity (hours, minutes) measured by a mechanism such as a clock and given that the term 'duration' is usually more appropriate in relation to ancient Greek texts where the duration between, for example, the season of Summer and the season of Autumn was determined by the observations (the appearance in the night sky) of certain constellations and stars.

*geniture.* γένεσις. The unusual English word geniture expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Alongside χρόνος, αἰών, and κόσμος, here γένεσις could well be a personification.

*It is as if the quidditas of theos is [...]* τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡςπερ οὐσία ἐστὶ... Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity - is more appropriate here, in respect of οὐσία, than essence, especially as 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical and modern connotations. Quidditas is thus a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation. In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a: ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστὶν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ. [Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.]

In addition, I follow the MSS, which have τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία.

*honour.* ἀγαθός. That is, the substance of theos - in mortals - is manifest in the brave, in nobility of character, in what being noble means. Regarding ἀγαθός as honour rather than some abstract, disputable 'good', qv. my commentary (i) on Poemandres 22 and (ii) on τὰ μὲν γὰρ φαινόμενα τέρπει [...] φανεροῖς in section 9 of Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς (tractate IV), and (iii) Appendix II and III.

*good fortune.* εὐδαιμονία.

*Sophia.* σοφία. A transliteration, because - just like ἀληθής - it is not necessarily here something abstract, something disputable, such as 'wisdom' or 'good judgement'. Just as with Aion and Kronos, it might be a personification or used here as an esoteric term which thus requires contextual interpretation.

*identity...arrangement.* ταυτότης...τάξις. An alternative for 'identity' would be

'form' (but not necessarily in the sense used by Plato and Aristotle) for the meaning seems to be that Aion provides the form, the identity, of beings with Kosmos arranging these forms into a particular order.

*of Kronos, variation.* See the note on Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α, above.

*vigour.* ἐνέργεια. As at Poemandres 14, not 'energy' given that the word energy has too many modern connotations and thus distracts from the meaning here. See also the note on 'activity' in section 5 where 'activity' is a more perspicacious translation.

*cyclic return and renewal.* ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις. I take this expression as implying something metaphysical rather than astronomical; an astronomical meaning as described, for example, in the Greek fragments of a book on astrology by Dorotheus of Sidon (qv. *Dorothei Sidonii carmen astrologicum. Interpretationem Arabicam in linguam Anglicam versam una cum Dorothei fragmentis et Graecis et Latinis*, edited by Pingree, Teubner, Leipzig, 1976).

For there is a similar metaphysical theme in Poemandres 17 - μέχρι περιόδου τέλους (cyclic until its completion) - with apokatastasis becoming (possibly as an echo of Greek Stoicism) a part of early Christian exegesis as exemplified by Gregory of Nyssa who wrote ἀνάστασις ἐστὶν ἡ εἰς τὸ ἀρχαῖον τῆς φύσεως ἡμῶν ἀποκατάστασις (*De Anima et Resurrectione*, 156C) where apokatastasis implies a return to, a resurrection of, the former state of being (physis) of mortals lost through 'original sin' and in respect of which returning baptism is a beginning.

### 3.

*substance.* ὕλη. qv. Poemandres 10. Given that the ancient Greek term does not exactly mean 'matter' in the modern sense (as in the science of Physics) it is better to find an alternative. Hence substance, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Thus 'materia' would be another suitable translation here of ὕλη.

*The craft of theos: Aion.* δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών. Aion as artisan who has, through theos, the power to not only craft Kosmos but also renew it, for Kosmos was/is not just a once occurring coming-into-being but is forever renewed: γενόμενος οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος.

On δύναμις as implying an 'artisan-creator' rather than just the 'power/strength' of a divinity, qv. the doxology in Poemandres 31.

*From Aion to Kosmos.* The suggestion is that 'the cosmic order' - Kosmos - is the work of Aion who/which is the source of, provides, 'the exemption from death' and the continuance of materia/substantia, the cyclic return and renewal.

#### 4.

*jumelle*. διπλοῦς. As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 14, "The much underused and descriptive English word *jumelle* - from the Latin *gemellus* - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

*psyche*. ψυχή. Avoiding the usual translation of 'soul' which imposes various, disputable, religious and philosophical meanings (including modern ones) on the text. A useful summary of the use of ψυχή from classical to Greco-Roman times is given in DeWitt Burton: *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

*Theos is presenced in perceiversion...* The term 'presenced' expresses the esoteric meaning of the text better than something such as "theos is in perceiversion", especially given what follows: a description of the layers of being, of the whole, complete, cosmic, Body having within it other bodies, other layers or types of being, such as Kronos.

*Within, it is filled; outside, it is enclosed ... a vast, fully-formed, life.* The suggestion is that it - the cosmic Body - is enclosed, encircled, by psyche which fills the cosmos with Life.

It is possible to understand this mystically as an allusion to the difference between what is esoteric and what is exoteric, with 'within' referring to an inner/esoteric perception and understanding, and 'outer' as referring to the exoteric. That is, the exoteric understanding is of something vast, fully-formed, complete, and living (μέγα καὶ τέλειον ζῶον) while the inner understanding is of living beings who, "replete with psyche", are connected to theos through perceiversion. The exoteric perception is also described in the preceding "unchanging and undecaying" aspect of the heavens, with the esoteric referring to the "changeable and decayable" nature of living things on Earth.

#### 5.

*Necessitas*. Although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable (although less readable), because even if what is meant is not 'wyrd' - qv. Ἀνάγκης, the primordial goddess of incumbency, of wyrd, of that which is beyond, and the origin of, what we often describe as our Fate as a mortal being [cf. Empedocles, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Diels-Kranz, 31, B115] - English terms such as 'necessity' and 'constraint' are somewhat inadequate, vague, especially given what follows: εἴτε

πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶεται ἢ οἰήσεται τις.

Thus the term requires contextual interpretation.

*physis*. φύσις. An important theme/principle in the Poemandres tractate and in Aristotle, and a term which suggests more than what the English terms Nature - and the 'nature' or 'character' of a thing or person - denote. In respect of Aristotle, qv. Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α, quoted above in respect of my use of the term quidditas.

What physis denotes is something ontological: a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

*activity*. For ἐνέργεια here since the term 'energy' is - given its modern and scientific connotations - inappropriate and misleading.

*crafting*. See the note on δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών above.

*descend down*. In respect of ἐκπεσῆ, cf. Basil of Caesarea, Epistulae, Γλυκερίω: ἐκπεσῆ δὲ καὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μετὰ τῶν μελῶν σου καὶ τῆς στολῆς.

*changelement*. μεταβολή. I have here chosen 'changelement' in preference to 'change' since changelement (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation.

*Inactive is thus a vacant nomen*. ἀργία γὰρ ὄνομα κενόν ἐστὶ. The unusual English word nomen - a direct borrowing from the Latin - is more appropriate than 'word' since nomen can mean a name and also a designation, for what is suggested is that in respect of someone who crafts, creates, things - theos - and what is created, brought-into-being, the designation and the name 'inactive' are not there. A suitable simile might be that of the second personal name (nomen) of a Roman citizen which designated their *gens* and, later, their status. Thus theos has no gens because theos is unique, and the status of theos cannot be compared to that of any other being because the status of theos is also unique.

In respect of ποιέω, I prefer 'create' rather than the somewhat prosaic 'make'.

## 6.

I am inclined to agree with Scott - *Hermetica*, Volume I, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924, p.210 - that after the end of the first paragraph of section 6 [For every being there is a coming-into-being ... not independent of him but rather comes-into-being because of him] the tractate should be divided. Indeed, there might even have been a melding of two different tractates (or two different authors) given the contrast between the first and the second part.

*undecayable*. ἀκήρατος. That is, a privation of κηραίνω: decay, spoiled, perish. Undecayable is more apt here than 'undefiled' or 'pure' especially as Thomas More, in 1534 in his A Treatise On The Passion, wrote of "the infinite perfection of their undecayable glory."

*eldern*. For παλαιός. The Middle English forms of eldern include elldern and eldrin, and the etymology is 'elder' plus the suffix 'en'. In comparison to this rather evocative English word, alternatives such as 'ancient' seem somewhat prosaic.

7.

*Observe also the septenary cosmos ... separate aeonic orbits*. Nock - who as Copenhaver et al - renders αἰών as 'eternity' translates this passage as: Vois aussi la hiérarchie des sept cieux, formés en bon ordre suivant une disposition éternelle, remplissant, chacun par une différente, l'éternité.

*phaos*. As in my Poemandres - and for reasons explained there - a transliteration of φῶς, using the Homeric φάος. To translate simply as 'light' obscures the elemental nature of phaos.

*no fire anywhere*. As in the Poemandres tractate (qv. sections 4, 5, et seq.) not 'fire' in the literal sense but fire as an elemental principle. In the Poemandres tractate - which describes the origins of beings - Fire plays an important role, as at section 17,

"those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceiviation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceiviation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion."

*fellowship*. The meaning of φιλία here is debatable, as usual renderings such as 'love' and 'friendship' seem somewhat inappropriate given the context. It is possible it refers to a principle such as the one suggested by Empedocles where it is the apparent opposite of νεῖκος, qv. the mention of Empedocles by Isocrates (Antidosis, 15.268) - Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ τέτταρα, καὶ νεῖκος καὶ φιλίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς - and fragments such as 31, B35 and 31, B115 (Diels-Kranz: Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker) with νεῖκος implying 'disagreement' and φιλότης something akin to 'fellowship'.

The contrast between νεῖκος and φιλότης is also mentioned - interestingly in regard to the source of motion - by Aristotle in Metaphysics, Book 12, 1072a:

Ἐμπεδοκλῆς φιλίας καὶ τὸ νεῖκος.

*archon and hegemon.* I follow the MSS which have ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων. Since both ἄρχων and ἡγέμων have been assimilated into the English language (ἄρχων c. 1755 and ἡγέμων c. 1829) and retain their original meaning it seemed unnecessary to translate them.

*prodromus.* πρόδρομος. Another Greek word assimilated into the English language (c. 1602 and appearing in a translation of Ovid's Salmacis and Hermaphroditus) and which retains the meaning of the Greek here: a forerunner, a precursor; a moving ahead and in front of.

*the Earth amid them all.* I incline toward the view that τήν τε γῆν μέσσην τοῦ παντός does not mean that 'the Earth is at the centre of the universe' (or something similar) - since κόσμος is not directly mentioned - but rather that the Earth is in the midst of - among - all, the whole, (παντός) that exists.

*foundation.* I take the sense of ὑποστάθμη here to be 'foundation' rather than implying some sort of 'sediment', gross or otherwise.

*nurturer.* τιθήνη.

*deathless, deathful.* γν. Poemandres 14: θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. As there, I take the English words from Chapman's *Hymn to Venus* from the Homeric Hymns: "That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man."

*travelling.* ὑποστάθμη. The context suggests 'travelling', and 'going around or about' in a general sense, rather than 'circling' in some defined astronomical sense.

## 8.

*all in motion.* In a passage critical of Plato and in respect of motion, psyche and the heavens, Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* wrote: τὸ αὐτὸ ἐαυτὸ κινεῖν: ὕστερον γὰρ καὶ ἅμα τῷ οὐρανῷ ἡ ψυχὴ, ὥς φησίν. (Book 12, 1072a)

*in every way, a unity.* cf. sections 10 and 11 of the Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς tractate (IV) with their mention of μονάς.

*hastiness.* ταχυτής. To translate as either 'speed' or 'velocity' is to leave the text open to misinterpretation, since the concept of speed/velocity as a measure (precise or otherwise) of the time taken to travel a certain distance was unknown in the ancient world.

## 10.

*devoid of logos.* γν. Poemander 10. As there, ἄλογος is simply 'without/devoid of or lacking in logos'. It does not necessarily here, or there, imply 'irrational' or 'unreasoning'. It might, for example, be referring to how logos is explained in texts such as Poemandres where distinctions are made between logoi, such as pneuma logos and phasma logos.

In addition, I follow the MSS which have only καὶ τοῦ ἀλόγου.

*presence life.* ἔμψυχος. That is, are living; have life; embody, are animated by, life; and thus are not lifelessly cold.

*psyche of itself [...] the creator of deathless being.* Although the Greek wording is somewhat convoluted the meaning is that while psyche is the "cause of the life" of beings which are animated with life, it is the creator of deathless life who is the cause of all life.

*What then of the living that die and the deathless ones?* I follow the emendation of Tiedemann who has ἀθάνατων in place of θνητῶν.

## 11.

*if not One, the theos.* The phrase εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός occurs in Mark 10.18 and Luke 18.19. I have translated literally in an attempt to preserve the meaning, lost if one translates as The One God.

*Theos therefore is One.* I have omitted the following γελοιότατον - "most absurd" - as a gloss. In respect of 'One' here - εἷς - what is implied is not the numeral one but rather "not composed of separate parts", complete of itself, the opposite of 'many', and so on. That is, an undivided unity.

*divinity-presenced.* θεϊότης. This word imputes the sense of 'the divine (made) manifest' or less literally 'divine-ness' whence the usual translation of 'divinity'. I have opted for divinity-presenced to express something of its original meaning and its uncommonality.

## 12.

*He creates all things.* I have omitted the following ἐν πολλῷ γελοιότατον as an untranslatable gloss.

*otiose.* καταργέω. Since otiose implies more than being 'idle' or 'unoccupied' it is apt, implying as it does "having no practical function; redundant; superfluous".

## 13.

*no one really exists without producing...* Following the emendations of Nock, who has σε μηδὲν ποιοῦντα μὴ δυνάμενον εἶναι.

*apprehend.* νοέω. To apprehend also in the sense of 'discover'.

*this is Life; this is the beautiful, this is the noble; this is the theos.* ἔστι δὲ τοῦτο [...] ζωή, τοῦτο δέ ἐστι τὸ καλόν, τοῦτο δέ ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ θεός. A succinct expression of the main theme of the tractate and of one of the main themes of the hermetic weltanschauung.

#### 14.

*enosis.* ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo-Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

#### 15.

*eikon.* εἰκὼν. Another mystical term requiring contextual interpretation, cf. Poemandres 31, regarding which I wrote in my commentary: "I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his Mystagogia [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence."

*My dear Hermes.* Omitting the following δεισιδαίμων ὥς ἀκούεις as a gloss.

*occurrences.* πάθη. I interpret this not in some anthropomorphic way - as 'passions' - but metaphysically (as akin to πάθημα), and thus as occurrences, events, happenings, that here regularly occur to Kosmos and which change and renew it despite (or perhaps because of) the change it undergoes. cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 1, 982b: οἷον περί τε τῶν τῆς σελήνης παθημάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ τὸν ἥλιον καὶ ἄστρα καὶ περὶ τῆς τοῦ παντὸς γενέσεως.

*the cyclic a turning.* The meaning here of στροφή is problematic. Given the context, my suggestion is 'turning' in the sense of a change that is positive and



possibility evolutionary, as πάθη can lead to positive change, in humans, in Nature, and in things.

16.

*polymorphous*. παντόμορφος. As for the rest of the sentence, vis-a-vis 'form', there is no adequate, unambiguous, word to re-present μορφή given how, for example, the English term 'morph' has acquired various meanings irrelevant here and given that the English term 'form' has associations with Plato when used to translate ἰδέα.

*without-form*. ἄμορφος.

*kind*. For ἰδέα. To avoid confusion with 'form' and because it is apposite here.

17.

*incorporeal kind*. In respect of ἀσώματος, cf. the comment about Socrates and Plato in Placita Philosophorum by Pseudo-Plutarch: τὸν θεὸν τὴν ὕλην τὴν ἰδέαν. ὁ δὲ θεὸς νοῦς ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου, ὕλη δὲ τὸ ὑποκείμενον πρῶτον γενέσκει καὶ φθορᾷ, ἰδέα δ' οὐσία ἀσώματος ἐν τοῖς νοήμασι καὶ ταῖς φαντασίαις τοῦ θεοῦ. (1.3)

*mountains which appear in depictions*. I have chosen 'depictions' because depiction could refer to paintings on vases or to wall-paintings or to some other medium or art-form where mountains might be depicted, and it is not clear from the context which is meant.

18.

φαντασία. Not here simply 'appearance' in the ordinary sense of the term but a 'making visible' such that it is apprehended by us in a particular way, as a re-presentation of what it actually is. Hence: "an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise."

19.

*urge your psyche to go to...* The whole passage is interesting and evocative, with psyche here signifying 'spirit' as in "let your spirit wander to other places" and thus invoking something akin to what we now might describe as conscious imagination.

*go to any land*. Following the MSS rather than the emendation Nock accepts which is εἰς Ἰνδικὴν. There seems to me no justification for jarringly introducing India here.

*Ocean.* Ὠκεανός. That is, a sea beyond the Mediterranean, such as the Atlantic.

*Aether.* cf. Poemandres 17, ἐκ δὲ αἰθέρος τὸ πνεῦμα ἔλαβε, where I noted in my commentary: "It is best to transliterate αἰθήρ - as Æther - given that it, like Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and pneuma, is an elemental principle, or a type of (or a particular) being, or some-thing archetypal."

*nor the vortex.* οὐχ ἡ δίνη. Presumably δίνη here refers to the celestial movement of the planets and stars as observed from Earth.

*burst through.* cf. Poemandres 14: ἀναρρήξας τὸ κράτος τῶν κύκλων, "burst through the strength of the spheres."

*The Entirety.* Even though 'universe' is implied, I have refrained from using that English word given its modern astronomical and cosmological connotations, and have instead opted for a literal translation of ὅλος.

*ordered system.* κόσμος here as 'the ordered system' just described: the land, ocean, Sun, the heavens, the bodies of the stars.

**20.**

*purposes.* νοήματα.

**21.**

*enclose your psyche in your body.* cf. section I of tractate VII where enclosing the psyche in the body is also mentioned.

*indulging the body and rotten.* φιλοσώματος here implies 'indulging the body' rather than 'loving the body' just as κακός implies 'rotten', 'base', rather than some abstract, disputable 'evil' or (vide Nock) "le vice suprême."

*the numinous.* τὸ θεῖον. In other words, 'the divine'.

*its own (way).* Following the MSS which have ἰδία, omitted by Nock.

*eikon.* Tentatively reading οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ εἰκὼν θείου, which is not altogether satisfactory. The MSS have εἰκόνι. Nock emends to οὐδὲν γάρ ἐστιν ὃ οὐκ ἔστιν (there is nothing that it is not) which seems somewhat at odds with the preceding "to be completely rotten is..." and with theos/the numinous being evident, presenced, in τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία.

Regarding eikon, qv. the note in the commentary on section 15.

**22.**

*Speak softly.* εὐφήμησον is a formulaic phrase (cf. Tractate XIII:8, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ εὐφήμησον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ καταπαύσει τὸ ἔλεος εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ) suggesting "speak softly" and with reverence.

---

## Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ

### To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation

#### Tractate XII

ο ο ο

#### Introduction

While the first few sentences of the twelfth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum have some similarity to what Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, wrote in a polemic a century or two later [1], the rest of the twelfth tractate - with its mention of the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων (the Noble Daimon), with its echo of Heraclitus, with its mention that "some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity," and with its themes of ψυχή (psyche) and ἀνάγκη (wyrd, 'necessity', 'fate') - is ineluctably part of Greco-Roman paganism, where by the term paganism I personally - following Cicero [3] - mean "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." [3] Furthermore, this unity derives from 'the theos', the primary divinity, who gifted we mortals with life, and is manifest in - presenced by - other divinities, by daimons [4], and by what we have come to describe as Nature, that is, as the natural world existing on Earth with its diversity of living beings.

Furthermore, although, as with several other tractates, the name of Τάτ (Thoth) appears in the title, there is nothing in the text, or in the other texts of the Corpus, which points to native Egyptian influence; a lack of influence supported

by the recent scholarly edition of the ancient *Book of Thoth* edited by Jasnow and Zauzich [5], and by the earlier work of A.-J. Festugiere [6].

ooo

[1] *Epistula de Decretis Nycaenae Synodi*, II, 3f, and IV, 22ff.

[2] "Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quod nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum - nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." M. Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Liber Secundus, xiii, xiv, 37

[3] The quotation is from my 2014 essay *Education And the Culture of Patheism*, and paraphrases what Cicero wrote in Book II (xiii and xiv) of his *De Natura Deorum*.

As I noted in the aforementioned essay,

"it is my considered opinion that the English term 'balanced' (a natural completeness, a natural equilibrium) is often a better translation of the classical Latin *perfectus* than the commonly accepted translation of 'perfect', given what the English word 'perfect' now imputes (as in, for example, 'cannot be improved upon'), and given the association of the word 'perfect' with Christian theology and exegesis (as, for example, in suggesting a moral perfection)."

[4] A δαίμων was considered to be a divinity who undertook to protect places 'sacred to the gods' or who - following the deliberations of a particular deity or of various deities - undertook to intercede in the lives of mortals by, for example, bringing them good fortune or misfortune. It was thus a tradition in ancient Greece and Rome to, at a meal, toast with wine the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων in the hope that he would bring them good fortune. Similarly, the Romans especially would offer a toast to the Ἄγνωστος Θεός (the Unknown Theos) and/or to the Ἄγνωστος Δαίμων (the Unknown Daemon) in the hope of not offending a deity or daimon whose name they did not know.

To translate δαίμων as 'demon' - as some do - is misleading, and can lead to a retrospective reinterpretation of the text given what the English term 'demon' now imputes as a result of over a thousand years of Christianity.

[5] Richard Jasnow & Karl-Theodore Zauzich, *The Ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth: A Demotic Discourse on Knowledge and Pendant to the Classical Hermetica*. Volume 1: Text. Harrassowitz, 2005.

[6] A.-J. Festugière, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 volumes. J. Gabalda, 1944-1954

---

### Translation

[1] Perceiveration, Thoth, is of the quidditas of theos, if there is a quidditas of theos, and if so then only theos completely understands what that quidditas is. Perceiveration is thus not separated from the quiddity of theos but rather expands forth, as does the light of the Sun, with this perceiveration, in mortals, theos so that some mortals are deities with their mortal nature close to divinity.

For the noble daimon spoke of deities as deathless mortals and of mortals as deathful deities, while in living beings deprived of logos perceiverance is their physis.

[2] Where psyche is, there also is perceiveration just as where Life is there also is psyche. But in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life empty of perceiverance while perceiveration is the patron of the psyche of mortals labouring for their nobility. For those deprived of logos it co-operates with the physis of each, while for mortals it works against that.

Every psyche presented in a body is naturally rotted by pleasure and pain for in that mixtion of a body the pleasure and the pain boil as profluvia into which the psyche is immersed.

[3] Whatever psyches perceiveration governs it manifests its own resplendence, working as it does against their predispositions. Just as an honourable physician painfully uses cautery or a knife on a body seized by sickness so does perceiveration distress psyche, extracting from it that pleasure which is the genesis of all psyche's sickness.

A serious sickness of psyche is neglect of the divine from whence prognostications and thence all rottenness and nothing noble. Yet perceiveration can work against this to secure nobility for psyche as the physician does for soundness of body.

[4] But the psyche of mortals who do not have perceiveration as their guide suffer the same as living beings deprived of logos, for when there is co-operation with them and a letting-loose of yearnings they are dragged along

by their cravings to be voided of logos, and - akin to living beings deprived of logos - they cannot stop their anger nor their emotive yearnings nor become disgusted by rottenness.

For such yearnings and anger are overwhelmingly bad. And on those ones, the theos - avenger, confutant - will impose what custom demands.

[5] Father, if that is so, then your previous discourse regarding Meiros seems at risk of being altered. For if it is indeed Meiros-decreed for someone to be unfaithful or desecrate what is sacred or be otherwise bad, then why is that person punished when they have been constrained by Meiros to do the deed?

My son, all that is done is Meiros-decreed with nothing corporeal independent of that. For neither nobility nor rottenness are produced by accident. It is Meiros-decreed that they having done what is bad are afflicted which is why it was done: to be afflicted by what afflicts them.

[6] But for now let the discourse not be about badness or Meiros; they are spoken about elsewhere. Instead, let us discourse about perceiviation; what it is able to do and how it varies. For mortals, it is a particular thing while for living beings deprived of logos it is something else. Also, in those other living beings it does not produce benefits. But because it can control the irritable, the covetous, it is not the same for everyone with it being appreciated that some of those persons are reasonable while others are unreasonable.

All mortals are subjected to Meiros as well as to geniture and changement, which are the origin and the consummation of Meiros,

[7] with all mortals afflicted by what is Meiros-decreed, although those gifted with sentience who - as mentioned - are governed by perceiviation are not afflicted in the same way as others. Because they are distanced from rottenness, they are not afflicted by the rotten.

What, father, are you then saying? That the unfaithful one, that the killer, and all other such ones, are not bad?

My son, the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted as if they had been unfaithful just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed. It is not possible to avoid geniture nor the disposition of changement although the one of perceiviation can avoid rottenness.

[8] I heard that from of old the noble daimon spoke of - and would that he had written it for that would have greatly benefited the race of mortals since he alone, my son, as first-born divinity beholding everything, certainly gave voice to divine logoi - but, whatever, I heard him to say that all that exists is one, particularly conceptible things.

We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion, whose perceivance is noble as is his psyche, and with this as it is, there is nothing separable among what is conceptible. Thus perceivance, Archon of everything and also the psyche of theos, can do whatever it desires.

[9] Therefore you should understand, relating these words to your previous question when you asked about Meiros. For if, my son, you diligently eliminate disputatious argument you will discover that perceivance - psyche of theos - does in truth rule over Meiros and Custom and everything else. There is nothing he is unable to do: not placing a mortal psyche over Meiros, nor, if negligent of what comes to pass, placing it under Meiros. And of what the noble daimon said, these were the most excellent about all this.

How numinous, father; and how true, how beneficial.

[10] And now, can you explain this to me. You said that perceivance in living beings deprived of logos is in accordance with their physis and in consort with their cravings. Yet the cravings of living beings deprived of logos are, I assume, somatic, and if perceivance co-operates with the cravings and if the cravings of those deprived of logos are somatic then is not perceivance also somatic, in alliance with the somatic?

Excellent, my son. A good question which I have to answer.

[11] Everything incorporeal when corporified is somatical, although it is properly of the somatic. For all that changes is incorporeal with all that is changed corporeal. The incorporeal is changed by perceivance, with changeability somatic. Both the changing and the changed are affected, with one leading, the other following. If released from the corporeal, there is release from the somatic. In particular, my son, there is nothing that is asomatic with everything somatic with the somatic being different from the somatical. For one is vigorous, the other non-active. The corporeal, in itself, is vigorous, either when changed or when not changing, and whichever it is, it is somatic, However, the incorporeal is always acted upon which is why it is somatical.

But do not allow such denotata to vex you, for vigour and the somatic are the same, although there is nothing wrong in using the better-sounding denotatum.

[12] Father, that was a clear answer that you gave.

Take note, my son, of the two things that theos has favoured mortals with, over and above all other deathful living beings: perceivance and logos, equal in value to deathlessness, and if they use those as required then there is no difference between them and the deathless. And when they depart from the corporeal they will be escorted by both to the assembly of the gods and the fortunate ones.

[13] And yet, father, do other living beings not have language?

No, my son, they have sounds, and language is quite different from sounds. Language is shared among all mortals while each kind of living being has its own sounds.

And also, father, among mortals for each folk have a different language.

Yes, my son, different but since mortal nature is One then language is also One, for when interpreted they are found to be the same whether in Egypt or in Persia or in Hellas. Thus it seems, my child, that you are unaware of the significance and the merit of language.

That hallowed divinity, the noble daimon, spoke of psyche in corporeality, of perceivation in psyche, of logos in perceivation, of perceivation in the theos, and of the theos as the father of those.

[14] For logos is eikon of perceivation, perceivation that of theos, with corporeality that of outward form, and outward form that of psyche. The finest part of Substance is Air. Of Air, psyche. Of psyche, perceivation. Of perceivation, theos, with theos encompassing all things and within all things; with perceivation encompassing psyche, psyche encompassing Air, and Air encompassing Substance.

Necessitas, forseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos, and of the arrangement of Substance, and whatever is apprehended is essence with that essence of each their ipseity. Of the corpora that exist, each is a multiplicity, and since the ipseity of combined corpora is the changement of one corpus to another they always retain the imputrescence of ipseity.

[15] Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

Substance is One, and the complete cosmic order - a mighty theos and eikon of and in unison with a mightier one - is, in maintaining the arrangements and the purpose of the father, replete with Life. And through the paternally given cyclic return of Aion there is nothing within it - in whole or in part - which is not alive.

For nothing of the cosmic order that has come-into-being is - or is now or will be - necrotic since the father has determined that Life shall be there while it exists. And thus, because of Necessitas, it is divine.

[16] Thus, how - my son - in that eikon of all things with its repletion of Life can there be necrosis? For necrosis is putritude and putritude is perishment. How then is it possible for any portion of what is not putrid be be putrid or for



anything of theos to perish?

Therefore, father, do not the living beings - who have their being there - not perish?

Speak wisely, my son, and do not be led away by the denotata of being-becoming. For, my son, they do not perish but as combined corpora are dissolved with such a dissolving not death but the dissolution of the melding, and dissolved not so as to perish but for a new coming-into-being. For what is the vigour of Life if not change?

What then, of Kosmos, does not change? Nothing, my child.

[17] Does the Earth seem to you, father, to not change?

No, my son. But she is alone in that there are many changes but also stasis. For would it not be illogical if the nourisher - she who brings-forth everything - never changed? It is not possible for she, the bringer-forth, to bring-forth without being changed. It is illogical for you to enquire if the fourth parsement is inactive, since an unchanging corpus is indicative of inactivity.

[18] You should therefore understand that what exists of Kosmos is everywhere changing, either growing or declining, and that what is changing is living with all that lives not, because of Necessitas, the same. For Kosmos, in the entirety of its being, is not changeable even though its parts can be changeable, with nothing putrefiable or perishable, although such denotata can confuse we mortals. For geniture is not Life but rather alertness, nor is changement death but rather a forgetting.

Since this is so, Substance, Life, Pneuma, Psyche, Perceivation, are all deathless, with every living being some combination of them.

[19] Because of perceivation all living beings are deathless, and most certain of all is that mortals are, for they - receptive to theos - can interact with theos. For only with this living being does theos commune in nightful dreams and daylight auguration, forewarning what is possible through birds, through entrails, through the movements of air, and through trees of Oak. And thus do mortals profess to know what was past, what is now, what will be.

[20] Observe, my son, that every other living being inhabits a certain part of the world; in water for those of the water, on dry land for those on land, and above the ground for those of the air. But mortals employ them all; land, water, air, fire. They observe the heavens, and touch it through their senses, and theos encompasses and is within all such things, for he is Change and Capability.

Thus, my son, it is not difficult to apprehend theos.

[21] If you are disposed to consider him, then perceive the arrangement of Kosmos and how that arrangement is well-ordered. Perceive Necessitas in what is apparent and the foreseeing in what has come-into-being and what is coming-into-being. Perceive Substance replete with Life, and the great, the influentive, theos together with all the noble and the beautiful divinities, daimons, and mortals.

But those, father, are actuosities.

Yet, my son, if they are only actuosities then by whom - other than theos - are they actuose? Or do you not know that just as aspects of the world are the heavens, the land, the Water, and the Air, then in the same way his aspects are deathlessness, blood, Necessitas, Foreseeing, Physis, Psyche, Perceivation, and that the continuance of all these is what is called nobility? And that there is not anything that has come-into-being or which is coming-into-being that is or will be without theos?

[22] He is within Substance, then, father?

If, my son, Substance was separate from theos then where, to what place, would you assign it? To some heap that is not actuose? But if it is actuose, then by whom is it actuose? And we spoke of actuosities as aspects of theos.

So who then brings life to living beings? Who deathlessness to the deathless? Who change to those changed? And if you say Substance or corpus or essence, then understand that they also are actuosities of theos, so that the substantiality is the actus of Substance, corporeality the actus of corpora, and essentiality the actus of essence. And this is theos, All That Exists.

[23] For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not. Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything.

This, my son, is the Logos, to be respected and followed. And if there is one way to follow theos, it is not to be bad.

ooo

## Commentary

### Title.

Περὶ νοῦ κοινοῦ πρὸς Τάτ. To Thoth, Concerning Mutual Perceivation.

### 1.

*perceivation*. As with my other translations of Corpus Hermeticum texts I translate νοῦς not as 'mind' but as perceivation/perceiverance, qv. my commentary on Poemandres, 2.

*quidditas*. οὐσία. Here, as with tractates VI and XI, 'essence' in respect of theos is not an entirely satisfactory translation given what the English term essence often now imputes. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and requires contextual interpretation. As in tractate VI, one interpretation of quidditas is ontological, as 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presenced in - and perceived by we mortals via or as - φύσις (physis). Which interpretation has the virtue of avoiding assumptions as to whether the author is here presenting something similar to the Stoic weltanschauung or to other ancient weltanschauungen.

*understands*. In respect of οἶδεν as 'understand' rather than 'know' qv. 1 Corinthians 14:16, ἐπειδὴ τί λέγεις οὐκ οἶδεν: "since he does not understand what you say." Furthermore, in Plato, Meno, 80e 'understanding' and 'understand' make more sense than the conventional 'knowing' and 'know':

ὁρᾷς τοῦτον ὡς ἐριστικὸν λόγον κατάγεις ὡς οὐκ ἄρα ἔστιν ζητεῖν ἄνθρωπῳ οὔτε ὃ οἶδε οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδε; οὔτε γὰρ ἂν ὃ γε οἶδεν ζητοῖ οἶδεν γὰρ καὶ οὐδὲν δεῖ τῷ γε τοιούτῳ ζητήσεως οὔτε ὃ μὴ οἶδεν οὐδὲ γὰρ οἶδεν ὅτι ζητήσει.

Do you realize what a contestable argument you introduce? That a mortal cannot inquire either about what he understands or about what he does not understand? That he cannot inquire about what he understands because he understands it with an inquiry thus not necessary; and that he cannot inquire about what he does not understand because he does not understand what he should inquire about.

*quiddity of theos*. οὐσιότητος τοῦ θεοῦ. Using the word quiddity here not as a

synonym of quidditas but as a synonym of 'quidditiveness', where quidditative is "of or relating to the essential quidditas of some-thing", in this case theos.

*mortal nature.* ἀνθρωπότης. I incline toward the view that the neutral term 'mortal nature' is appropriate here, given what the English word 'humanity' now so often implies; a neutral term suggested not only by the scholia to the first verses of Orestes by Euripides:

κατασκευὴν ποιούμενος ὁ ποιητὴς τῆς ἰδίας προτάσεως τῆς ὅτι πάντα φέρει τὰ δεινὰ ἢ ἀνθρωπότης, ἐπιφέρει ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μακάριοι καὶ ὀλβιοὶ δόξαντες ἄνθρωποι οὐκ ἄμοιροι συμφορῶν καὶ παθῶν γεγόνασιν· ἐξ ἐνὸς δὲ τοῦ Ταντάλου καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους παραδηλοῖ. τὸν Τάνταλον δὲ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλον τῇ ὑποθέσει προσείληφε διὰ τὸ ἐξ ἐκείνου τοῦ γένους καὶ τὸν Ὀρέστην κατὰγεσθαι

but also by *De Sancta Trinitate Dialogus* of Athanasius (Migne, *Patrologiæ Græcæ*, 28, 1115), with the first verse of the Orestes expressing what is meant and implied:

Οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν δεινὸν ὧδ' εἰπεῖν ἔπος οὐδὲ πάθος οὐδὲ ξυμφορὰ θεήλατος, ἧς οὐκ ἂν ἄραιτ' ἄχθος ἀνθρώπου φύσις.

There is nothing that can be described, no suffering, and nothing sent by the gods, which is so terrifyingly strange that mortal nature cannot endure it.

*the noble daimon.* Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων. The daimon who can bring good fortune (health, wealth, happiness, honour) and other benefits to mortals and who thus is considered to be noble. As mentioned in the Introduction, a daimon is not a 'demon'.

*deathless...deathful.* For these in respect of ἀθάνατος and θνητὸς qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14, tractate VIII:1, and tractate XI:7ff.

The phrase spoken by the Ἀγαθὸς Δαίμων is similar to one attributed to Heraclitus:

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες. (Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz)

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life.

*deprived of logos.* ἄλογος. As at Poemandres 10 and tractate XI:10, a literal translation suggested by the context which thus avoids rather awkward expressions such as "animals without reason" and "irrational animals", and

which might also suggest not only various other meanings of logos such as "lacking (the faculty of) speech, lacking in sentience," but also that such living beings have not been gifted by theos with logos:

τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῶν, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivance is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life. (Poemandres 6)

*perceivance is their physis.* Reading ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις. Here φύσις implies their being - the type of being (the 'character') they have, and are - and thus means their quidditas, which quidditas is in contrast to that of theos, deities, and mortals.

## 2.

*psyche.* A transliteration, as in my translations of other tractates. It is possible to read the line as referring to personifications: "Where Psyche is, there also is Perceivance just as where Life is there also is Psyche." Classically understood, psyche is the anima mundi, the power that animates - gives life to and which orders - the world.

*in living beings deprived of logos, psyche is Life.* On first reading there seems to be a contradiction between what follows - ἡ ψυχὴ ζωὴ ἐστὶ κενὴ τοῦ νοῦ, [in living beings deprived of logos] psyche is Life empty of perceivance - and the preceding ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἀλόγοις ζώοις ὁ νοῦς ἡ φύσις ἐστὶν, which states that "in living beings deprived of logos perceivance is their physis." The sense of the Greek therefore seems to suggest that the perceivance of living beings deprived of logos is a vacuous, empty, one: they perceive but it does not benefit them in the same manner as perceivance benefits mortals because there is no understanding of, no rational apprehension of, what is perceived.

*mixtion.* σύνθετος. Mixtion is more appropriate here in such a metaphysical text than either 'composite' or 'compound', meaning as mixtion does compounded, combined; the condition or state of being mixed, melded, or composed of various parts.

*profluvia.* χυμός. That is, the bodily 'humours', anciently named as blood, phlegm, choler (χολέρα), and bile. Since the English word 'humour' now often suggests an entirely different meaning, I have chosen profluvia - from the Latin profluvium - in order to try and convey something of the meaning of the Greek, qv. Coleridge: "The same deadly sweats - the same frightful Profluvium of burning Dregs, like melted Lead - with quantities of bloody mucus from the Coats of the Intestines." *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1956. Volume II, 911: Letter dated 8th Jan.

*immersed.* βαπτίζω. Cf. tractate IV:3: καὶ ἐβαπτίσαντο τοῦ νοός, "and were immersive with perceivation."

### 3.

*cautery or a knife.* καίων ἢ τέμνων. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 848-850,

ὅτω δὲ καὶ δεῖ φαρμάκων παιωνίων,  
ἥτοι κέαντες ἢ τεμόντες εὐφρόνως  
πειρασόμεσθα πῆμ' ἀποστρέψαι νόσου

Whomsoever needs a healing potion  
By a burning-out or a well-judged cutting-away  
I shall seek to defeat the sickness of that injury.

*neglect of the divine.* ἀθεότης. The usual translation, atheism, seems to me to impose a particular and rigid meaning on the text given the association the word atheism now has with Christianity and in modern philosophy. The phrase 'neglect of the divine' expresses a more Hellenistic view, qv. the term ἀθεράπεντος and also Plutarch, who wrote:

Οὐκοῦν καὶ περὶ ὧν ὁ λόγος, ἡ μὲν ἀθεότης κρίσις οὔσα φαύλη τοῦ  
μηδὲν εἶναι μακάριον καὶ ἄφθαρτον εἰς ἀπάθειάν τινα δοκεῖ τῇ  
ἀπιστίᾳ τοῦ θείου περιφέρειν, καὶ τέλος ἐστὶν αὐτῇ τοῦ μὴ νομίζειν  
θεοὺς τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι, *De Superstitione*, 165b

Thus we return to our topic, neglect of the divine, which is the bad decision that nothing is hallowed or everlasting, which with its disbelief in the divine seems to lead to a type of apathy with the result that there is no fear of divinity since it does not exist.

### 4.

*for when there is co-operation with them...voided of logos.* The Greek here is somewhat obscure, although the meaning seems to be along the following lines: when perceivation co-operates with a serious sickness such as neglect of the divine then yearnings, desires, are given free reign so that those mortals, haplessly carried away by their cravings, become just like animals, voided of what makes them human.

*what custom demands.* In respect of νομός the term 'law' - with all its modern and Old Testament associations (as in 'the law of God') - is inappropriate since the Greek term implies what it is the customary thing to do. Hence, "what custom demands."

5.

*Meiros*. While μείρομαι here is conventionally understood as referring to 'fate', given the variety of meanings attributed to that term - a useful summary of classical usage is given in Book I, chapter XXVII of *Placita Philosophorum* attributed to the Pseudo-Plutarch - it seems apposite to suggest an alternative, especially as the text apparently does not provide a satisfactory answer to the question which Thoth goes on to ask: if 'fate' does compel someone to do something bad then why are they punished?

The mention of ἀνάγκης - 'Necessity', Ananke - in what follows (section 14: ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου καὶ τῆς τάξεως τῆς ὕλης) might indicate the Heraclitean sense of μείρομαι, as summarized by the Pseudo-Plutarch,

Ἡράκλειτος πάντα καθ' εἰμαρμένην, τὴν δ' αὐτὴν ὑπάρχειν καὶ ἀνάγκην.

Yet the immediate context - ἔλεγχον ὁ θεὸς ἐπέστησε τὸν νόμον - might seem to suggest θέσφατον (divine decree), as for example in Sophocles:

"εἴ τι θέσφατον πατρὶ χρησιμοῖσιν ἰκνεῖθ' ὥστε πρὸς παίδων θανεῖν."  
*Oedipus at Colonus*, 969-970

However, given that what follows - Εἰμαρμένης γὰρ πάντα τὰ ἔργα [...] καὶ χωρὶς ἐκείνης οὐδὲν ἐστι τῶν σωματικῶν - I have chosen to use a transliteration, *Meiros*, based on the personification *Moros* in Hesiod's *Theogony*:

νύξ δ' ἔτεκεν στυγερόν τε Μόρον καὶ Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον,  
τέκε δ' Ὕπνον, ἔτικτε δὲ φῶλον Ὀνειρώων (211-212)

And Night gave birth to odious *Moros*, to darksome *Kir* and to Death,  
and also brought-into-being *Hypnos* and the folk of Dreams.

While the transliteration *Meiros* has the undoubted advantage - as with *logos*, *theos*, *physis*, καὶ τὰ λοιπά - of requiring contextual interpretation and thus avoiding whatever presumptions the reader might have in respect of the meaning of the English term 'fate', it has the disadvantage of not having, in English, an appropriate suffix such as, in respect of fate, -ed allowing as that does εἰμαρτός to be translated by 'fated'. The only solution - somewhat awkward as it is - is to translate such a word by a term such as 'Meiros-decreed' (or *Meiros-appointed*) so that the phrase εἰ δ' ἄρα τις οὗτος εἰμαρτός ἥκει χρόνος (Plutarch, Alexander, 30.6) would approximate to "if indeed a *Meiros* appointed moment has now arrived."

*unfaithful*. The sense of μοιχεύω is not stridently moralistic, as the English term adultery - with all its Old Testament associations - now often still denotes and

has for centuries denoted with its implication of 'sin'. Rather, the sense is more anciently pagan: of marital unfaithfulness, of a personal (and thus dishonourable) betrayal, as in Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1374a, συγγενέσθαι ἄλλ' οὐ μοιχεῦσαι (not unfaithful in the matter of [sexual] intercourse). Similarly in Aristophanes:

ὁ δ' ἄλούς γε μοιχὸς διὰ σέ που παρατίλλεται. (*Plutus*, 170)

it will be because of you if the unfaithful one is caught, and their head shaved.

In addition, in origin the Anglo-Norman word *adulterie* - derived as it was from the Latin *adulterium* (adulteration, contaminating or debasing something) - simply meant marital unfaithfulness without the later religious associations such as voiced by Thomas More in his 1532 work *The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answer*: "wedlokke [...] whyche god hym selfe bothe blessed and commaunded in paradyse and whyche holy scripture commendeth where it sayth that wedlokke is honorable where the bedde is vndefyled wyth auowtry." (ccliiv)

*what is bad*. Reading τὸ κακὸν and not τὸ καλόν.

## 6.

*geniture and changement*. γενέσει καὶ μεταβολῇ. In respect of *geniture*, qv. my commentary on tractate XI:2, that "the unusual English word *geniture* expresses the meaning of γένεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else."

In respect of *changement*, as I noted in a comment on tractate XI:4, "I have here chosen 'changement' in preference to 'change' since *changement* (coming into English use around 1584) is more specific than 'change', suggesting variation, alteration, development, unfolding, transmutation."

## 7.

*gifted with sentience*. ἔλλογος. The Greek term occurs in the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle where he discusses the views of Eudoxus:

εὐδοξος μὲν οὖν τὴν ἡδονὴν τάγαθὸν ᾧετ' εἶναι διὰ τὸ πάνθ' ὁρᾶν ἐφιέμενα αὐτῆς καὶ ἔλλογα καὶ ἄλογα (1172b.10)

Eudoxus considered that delight was the beneficent since his perception was that all, sentient or not sentient, sought it.

In a comment on this passage from Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas wrote:

quod Eudoxus existimabat delectationem esse de genere bonorum,



quia videbat quod omnia desiderant ipsam, tam rationalia scilicet homines, quam irrationalia, scilicet bruta animalia. (*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, Book X, l. 2 n. 2)

where the contrast, as in Aristotle, is between those gifted with sentience and those lacking sentience, but with Aquinas adding that the latter are 'dumb' animals (*brutis animalibus*), a difference between humans and animals that he considers in detail in his *Summa Theologiae* (*Prima Secundae, Quaestiones 6-17*).

*killer*. φονεὺς. To use the English word 'murderer' as a translation of the Greek carries with it relatively modern connotations that in my opinion are inappropriate, given that the word 'murder' can impute the sense of "the deliberate and unlawful killing of a human being" and "the action of killing or causing destruction of life, regarded as wicked and morally reprehensible irrespective of its legality."

The classical sense is evident, for example, in Sophocles:

φονέα σε φημι τάνδρὸς οὗ ζητεῖς κυρεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 362)

I said you are the killer and thus the man you seek

κάνταῦθ' Ἀπόλλων οὔτ' ἐκεῖνον ἥνυσεν  
φονέα γενέσθαι πατρὸς οὔτε Λαῖον  
τὸ δεινὸν οὐφοβεῖτο πρὸς παιδὸς θανεῖν (*Oedipus Tyrannus*, 720-702)

So, in those days, Apollo did not bring about, for him,  
That he slay the father who begot him - nor, for Laius,  
That horror which he feared - being killed by his son.

Thus the choice is between two relatively neutral terms: killer, and slayer. Neither of which imputes the moralistic or legal sense of "unlawful killing" or of the act being "wicked and morally reprehensible." Instead, it is a statement of fact.

*the one gifted with sentience will, though not unfaithful, be afflicted... just as, though not a killer, they will as if they had killed.* An interesting passage which might be taken to mean that those gifted with sentience - who presumably are also, as the tractate states, "governed/guided by their perceivration" - have the ability because of such things to know, understand, to intuit, what killing and unfaithfulness mean and imply (especially in terms of affliction) as if they themselves had done such things. That is, they have empathy, and thus can avoid doing what is bad.

*disposition*. See the note regarding ποιότης in section 23 below.

*the noble daimon spoke of...would that he had written it.* This seems to allude to an aural tradition, perhaps (qv. my introduction to tractate III) an ἱερός Λόγος, which was never written down, with the suggestion that what is being recounted in this tractate is such a tradition.

*first-born divinity.* πρωτόγονος θεός. While some assume that this refers to something Egyptian - for example, to the deity Khnum - I incline toward the view that it may be (i) a reference to an Orphic tradition, given that there is an Orphic poem which beings Πρωτόγονον καλέω διφυῆ μέγαν αἰθερόπλαγκτον, or (ii) more probably a term still in general use in Hellenic culture given it that was, for example, an epithet of the goddess Persephone, and given that it occurs in the commentary on Plato's Timaeus by Proclus.

*divine logoi.* θείους λόγους. Cf. τοὺς λόγους διδάσκων and σοφίας λόγους in Poemandres 29. There, the logoi are the various forms (or emanations) of the logos, and include the pneumal logos, the phaomal logos, and the logos kyrios.

I [...] thus became a guide to those of my kind, informing them of the logoi - of the way and the means of rescue - and engendered in them the logoi of sapientia, with the celestial elixir to nurture them. (Poemandres 29)

*conceptible things.* νοητὰ σώματα. That is, objects - things, materia, 'bodies' - which can be conceived of, which are conceptible, rather than having been physically seen, qv. the 'atoms' of Democritus: ἔτερι δὲ ἄτομα καὶ κενόν. See also Sextus Empiricus: οἱ γὰρ ἀτόμους εἰπόντες ἢ ὁμοιομερείας ἢ ὄγκους ἢ κοινῶς νοητὰ σώματα πάντων τῶν ὄντων κατώρθωσαν πῇ δὲ διέπεσον (Adversus Mathematicos, X, 252).

*We have our being in potentiality, in activity, in Aion.* ζῶμεν δὲ δυνάμει καὶ ἐνεργεῖαι καὶ Αἰῶνι. In respect of Aion, qv. tractate XI:3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰών, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,  
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος  
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος·

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion.

*nothing separable.* οὐδὲν διαστατόν. As noted in respect of διαστατός in the commentary on tractate IV:1, "what is not meant is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise."

*Archon.* Cf. the MS reading ἄρχων καὶ ἡγέμων (archon and hegemon) in tractate XI:7. Since ἄρχων has been assimilated into the English language and

retained (c. 1755) its original meaning (ruler, governor, regent) it seems unnecessary to translate the term.

*perceivation...whatever it desires.* Cf Poemandres 12: ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς ὦν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς... Perceivation, as Life and phaos, father of all...

9.

*Numinous.* θεῖος. As at tractate IV:6 I have opted for the English word numinous - which dates from 1647, derived from the classical Latin *numen* - to express the meaning of θεῖος here.

10.

*somatic.* πάθος. The English word somatic - from the Greek σῶμα - means "of or relating to the body; physical, corporeal". As in tractate VI:2 the sense of πάθος here is one of physicality, as in being physically afflicted or affected such that a 'living being deprived of logos' cannot control or affect the affliction, in this instance their cravings. As such, the English word 'passion' is inappropriate here as a translation of πάθος because it implies strong or deep feelings or emotions generally in human beings and thus is somewhat anthropomorphic, especially as a distinction is being made, as in sections 2 and 5, between mortals and those living beings, such as animals, who lack logos, which logos together with perceivation, are - as mentioned in section 12 - the two most precious gifts theos has given to mortals: ὅτι δύο ταῦτα τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ ὁ θεὸς παρὰ πάντα τὰ θνητὰ ζῶια ἔχαρίσατο τὸν τε νοῦν καὶ τὸν λόγον, σότιμα τῇ ἀθανασίᾳ.

*in alliance with the somatic.* Reading συγχρηματίζων with the MSS and not the emendation συγχρωτίζων.

11.

*corporeal, incorporeal.* σῶμα, ἀσώματος. To try and express at least something of the meaning of the Greek here - which is somewhat metaphysically obscure - I have occasionally resorted to obsolete forms of those two English terms, such as 'corporified' (from corporify) implying "having a material or a bodily form".

In respect of the corporeal and the incorporeal, see tractates VIII and XI. In VIII one of the main themes is the corporeal: "It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that we now must speak..." In XI:22 it is stated that

οὐδὲν γὰρ ἀόρατον, οὐδὲ τῶν ἀσωμάτων· νοῦς ὁρᾶται ἐν τῷ νοεῖν, ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῷ ποιεῖν

nothing is unperceivable, not even the incorporeal, with  
perceivation evident through apprehension, theos through creation.

*somatical*. παθητά. The sense is of being affected by, or subject to, what is somatic. As what follows - καὶ κυρίως αὐτὰ ἐστὶ πάθη - attempts to explain, and as is made clear later on in this section (διαφέρει δὲ πάθος παθητοῦ) somatical should not be confused with somatic.

*changes, changed*. Given the context, the various senses of κίνησις here are change, not motion - moving, move - in the physical sense as at tractate XI:8, πάντα δὲ πλήρη ψυχῆς καὶ πάντα κινούμενα, τὰ μὲν περὶ τὸν οὐρανόν, τὰ δὲ περὶ τὴν γῆν, all are replete with psyche, all in motion, some around the heavens with others around the Earth.

*vigour*. ἐνέργεια. Qv. Poemandres 14 and 15. The English terms energy and energize have too many modern, irrelevant, connotations, in respect of the science of physics and otherwise.

## 12.

*perceiviation and logos*. Omitting - with Patrizi - the following τὸν δὲ προφορικὸν λόγον ἔχει as a gloss.

*deathlessness*. In respect of this unusual English word, qv. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *The Soul's Travelling* (IX),

"And as they touch your soul, they borrow  
Both of its grandeur and its sorrow,  
That deathly odour with which the clay  
Leaves on its deathlessness away."

*denotata, denotatum*. προσηγορία here implies more than 'name'. That is, a terminology; a specialized vocabulary, in this case one related to metaphysics (qv. πλανώμενος τῇ προσηγορίᾳ τοῦ γινομένου in section 16). Hence the translations 'denotata' and denotatum (singular) to suggest this.

## 13.

*And yet, do other livings not have language*. τὰ γὰρ ἄλλα ζῶια λόγῳ οὐ χρᾶται. While λόγος here is generally taken to mean 'speech', given what follows with its mention of animals making 'sounds' and the exposition regarding the different languages spoken by mortals, the translation 'language' is more apt, as in being able to communicate, to say something specific the meaning of which can be explained and understood by diverse others. A usage of λόγος as for example in the following exchange between Oedipus and the Chorus:

Οἰδίπους:

οἷσθ' οὖν ἃ χρῆζεις.

Χορός:

οἶδα.

Οἰδίπους:

φράζε δὴ τί φής.

Χορός:

τὸν ἐναγῆ φίλον μήποτ' ἐν αἰτία σὺν ἀφανεῖ λόγῳ σ' ἄτιμον βαλεῖν.

Oedipus:

Do you know what it is that you so desire?

Chorus:

I do know.

Oedipus:

Then explain what you believe it to be.

Chorus:

When a comrade is under oath, you should never accuse him because of unproved rumours and brand him as being without honour.

(Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 653-657)

*folk*. ἔθνος. Since the English term 'nation' now implies things which the Greek word does not - such as a modern political State - it is inappropriate here. A suitable alternative to folk would be 'people'.

*mortal nature*, Qv. section 1.

*one*. εἷς. It is probable that this refers to a metaphysical concept such as described in tractate XI:11,

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς,  
φανερῶτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ  
οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἂν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίνι γὰρ ἄλλῳ ἂν καὶ πρέποι  
ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός καὶ τὸν μὲν  
κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἕνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν  
καὶ θειότητα μίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one. But who is it? Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if

not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings? Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presented is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

*psyche in corporeality.* The context is indicative of σώματι here referring to corporeality in general; that is, the quality or state of being corporeal; bodily form or nature; materiality.

#### 14.

*eikon.* εἰκὼν, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 21 and 31, and also see tractate VIII:2 and tractate XI:15.

*outward form.* ἰδέα. To translate here simply as 'form' (or idea) may give the impression that the ἰδέα of Plato may be meant with the text thus interpreted in accord with his philosophy and especially with what has been termed his 'theory of forms'. However, since the reference here is to corporeality in the context of perceivization as εἰκὼν of theos, a more metaphysical sense is suggested. Hence, my interpretation as 'outward form', which thus leaves open the question as to whether or not there is any correlation with 'the theory of forms'.

*substance.* ὕλη. That is, the materia of 'things' and living beings. Qv. Poemandres 10 and tractate III:1.

*Air.* ἀήρ. Air as a fundamental element, hence the capitalization as with the preceding Substance.

*necessitas.* ἀνάγκη. In myth, Ananke was the ancient goddess of wyrd, thus having power over Meiros ('fate') and of what is considered necessary for mortals (such as death), hence the translation of 'necessity'. As mentioned in my commentary on tractate XII:5, although the Latin 'Necessitas' is a suitable alternative for the Greek, a transliteration (Ananke) is perhaps preferable although less readable.

*Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos.* Qv. tractate XII:5 where a similar expression occurs:

συνέχει δὲ τοῦτον ὁ αἰὼν, εἴτε δι' ἀνάγκην εἴτε πρόνοιαν εἴτε φύσιν  
καὶ εἴ τι ἄλλο οἶται ἢ οἰήσεται τις

Aion maintains this through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume

*foreseeing.* πρόνοια. Foreseeing includes such arts as prophecy.

*apprehended.* Cf. Poemandres 3: νοῆσαι τὴν τοῦ των φύσιν, to apprehend the physis of beings; that is to discern, discover, their being, their relation to other beings, and to Being.

*corpus, corpora*. I have here used a Latin term for σῶμα (*corpus*, plural *corpora*) in order to try to give some intimation of the meaning of the text (the Greek is somewhat obscure), and to avoid using the rather prosaic terms 'body' and 'bodies', and to thus suggest technical terms which expound and befit a metaphysical *weltanschauung*, implying as they do here 'materia' in general; the stuff, the material, that exists in the Universe, and how such *corpora* including mortals relate to *theos*.

15.

*arithmos*. I have detailed the reasons for transliterating ἀριθμός in my commentary on tractate IV:10. In essence, the translation 'number' does not express the metaphysical meaning here, qv. Aristotle *Metaphysics*, Book XIII, 1080b.20 and 1083b.10 et seq.

In addition, Proclus (in his Στοιχείωσις θεολογική, propositions 113f) wrote of ἀριθμός and ἐνάδες (*henads*) as essential parts of a cosmogony involving the gods, with Proclus equating ἐνάδες with those gods (op.cit., propositions 114ff),

εἰ γὰρ τῶν ἐνάδων διττὸς ὁ ἀριθμός, ὡς δέδεικται πρότερον, καὶ αἱ μὲν αὐτοτελεῖς εἰσιν αἱ δὲ ἐλλάμπεις ἀπ' ἐκείνων, τῷ δὲ ἐνὶ καὶ τάγαθῷ συγγενῆς καὶ ὁμοφυῆς ὁ θεῖος ἀριθμός, ἐνάδες εἰσὶν αὐτοτελεῖς οἱ θεοί. (114)

There is also an interesting passage in a fragment of the commentary on Aristotle by Andronicus of Rhodes where *psyche* is said to have been described as ἀριθμός:

ἀριθμὸν γὰρ ἐκάλουν φησὶ 'τὴν ψυχὴν ὅτι μηδὲν ζῶον ἐξ ἀπλοῦ σώματος ἀλλὰ κατὰ τινὰς λόγους καὶ ἀριθμοὺς κραθέντων τῶν πρώτων στοιχείων. (Themistii in libros Aristotelis De anima paraphrasis, XXXII, 23)

Regarding ἀριθμός in tractate IV:10, the relevant part is:

μονὰς οὗσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The *Monas*, since it is the origin, enfolds every *arithmos* without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every *arithmos* but not begotten by any.

*henads*. ἐνάδες. A transliteration in common use since the concept of the ἐνός - the Unity, often equated with μονάς - is metaphysical and has various interpretations in Plato, Iamblichus, Proclus, and others.

*cosmic order.* κόσμος. Cf. Poemandres 7.

*a mighty theos.* In respect of the term μέγας θεός it is interesting to note that frescoes in a Minoan settlement in Akrotiri on the island of Santorini depict η μεγάλη θεά (the mighty goddess) among women holding bunches of flowers and a woman holding a net which, given the presence of birds in the fresco, is possibly for catching birds as gifts for the goddess.

The term μέγας θεός also occurs in Acts 19:17 in reference to the Temple of Artemis - μεγάλης θεᾶς Ἀρτέμιδος ἱερὸν - with Artemis mentioned again in v.28, Μεγάλη ἡ Ἀρτεμις Ἐφεσίων (Powerful is Artemis of the Ephesians).

*cyclic return.* Qv. tractate XI:2, ἀποκατάστασις καὶ ἀνταποκατάστασις, cyclic return and renewal.

*while it exists.* Referring to the 'cosmic order' and thus to Kosmos, eikon of a more mighty divinity.

**16.**

*the denotata of being-becoming.* Qv. the comment in section 11 regarding denotata and denotatum.

**17.**

*nurturer.* τιθήνη. Cf. tractate XI:7, τροφὸν καὶ τιθήνην, nourisher and nurturer.

*fourth parsement.* τέταρτον μέρος. By a parsement - partiment, from the Latin partimentum - is meant the fundamental (the basic, elemental, primal) component or principle of 'things' as understood or as posited in Hellenic times. Here Earth is described as the fourth part, the other three being Air, Water, and Fire. Cf. Poemandres 8.

**18.**

*alertness.* αἴσθησις. Alertness as in being perceptively aware of one's surroundings. Cf. Poemandres 5.

*pnuema.* πνεῦμα. A transliteration for reasons explained in my commentary on the text of Poemandres 5. In sum, the usual translation of 'spirit' is too restrictive and has too many modern and Christian associations. The various senses of πνεῦμα in classical times are summarized in DeWitt Burton, *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχή, and Σάρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).



19.

*Therefore all living beings [...] perceiv[er]ation.* Reading διὰ τὸν νοῦν and not δι' αὐτόν.

20.

*capability.* δύναμις. Not 'strength' or 'power' per se, but rather having the capacity, the capability, to do - to change, to craft, to bring-into-being - anything. Cf. δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν in tractate XI: 3,

πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰὼν, ὕλη δὲ ὁ κόσμος,  
δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰὼν, ἔργον δὲ τοῦ αἰῶνος ὁ κόσμος, γενόμενος  
οὐποτε, καὶ ἀεὶ γινόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος· διὸ οὐδὲ φθαρήσεται ποτε  
αἰὼν γὰρ ἄφθαρτος οὐδὲ ἀπολεῖται τι τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, τοῦ κόσμου  
ὑπὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐμπεριεχομένου.

The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

21.

*influencive.* κινέω. That is, to affect things, to set things in motion, to cause change.

*actuosities.* ἐνέργειαι. The sense of the Greek here is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons. To try and convey something of this, I have chosen the English term 'actuosities' rather than 'energies' which - given what the English term 'energy' now often imputes - does not in my view express the metaphysical meaning here. The English word actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus, with the adjective actuose occurring in a 1677 book by Theophilus Gale: "Ἐνεργεῖν, as applied to God, notes his actuose, efficacious, and predeterminate concurrence in and with althings." (The Court of The Gentiles. Part III, London, 1677).

A more recent usage was by Ferrarin in chapter 8 - Aristotle's De anima and Hegel's philosophy of subjective spirit - of his book *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge University Press, 2001) where he wrote: "Hegel appropriates and transforms the meaning of *energeia* to define spirit. Spirit is actusosity..."

*aspects.* Reading μέρη ἐστὶ not μέλη ἐστὶ.

*blood.* Reading καὶ αἷμα with the MSS. In the metaphysical context of the tractate, blood as an 'aspect of theos' makes sense.

22.

*All That Exists.* τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe.

23.

*disposition.* ποιότης. As in section 7, not signifying here 'quality' but rather 'disposition,' qv. ποιός, what kind, nature, type, character.

What is being enumerated - οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος - are not abstractions (such as 'time') but rather mortal-type attributes and appellations that are irrelevant in respect of theos.

*respected and followed.* Given the metaphysical - not religious - tone and content of the tractate, I incline toward the view that προσκύνει καὶ θρήσκει here does not imply a Christian-type reverence or worship or even being religious, but rather respect and following, as various Hellenic weltanschauungen or philosophies were respected and followed.

---

Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ  
εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας

On A Mountain:  
Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth,  
An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis  
And The Requirement of Silence

### **Tractate XIII**

ooo

### **Translation**

[1] When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure. There was, from you, no disclosure; instead, you said no one can be rescued before the Palingenesis. Now, following our discussion as we were passing over the mountain I became your supplicant, inquiring into learning the discourse on Palingenesis since that, out of all of them, is the only one unknown to me, with you saying it would be imparted to me when I became separated from the world.

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world. Therefore - by explaining it either aloud or in secret - rectify my insufficiencies since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me.

Trismegistus, I am unknowing of what source a mortal is begotten and from what sown.

[2] My son, noetic sapientia is in silence, with the sowing the genuinely noble.

Father, that is completely impenetrable. So, of whom dispersed?

Of, my son, the desire of theos.

Father, of what kind then the begotten? For I do not share in such a quidditas and such a perceivitation.

Those begotten of theos are other than theos: young but entirely whole, mixon of all abilities.

Father, you speak enigmatically to me, not in the language of a teacher to a pupil.

My son, this emanation is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires.

[3] Father, while you speak of what is impractical and forced, I on my part seek what is straightforward. Was I produced as a foreign son of the paternal emanation? Do not repine me, father: I am a rightful son. Relate - plainly - the way of palingenesis.

My son, what is there to say? All that can be told is this: I saw an unshaped vista, brought-into-being through the generosity of theos, of me setting forth to a deathless body, and now I am not that before because engendered by perceivization.

This matter is not taught: not through that shaped part through which is seeing. Thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form. It is not as if I am biochrome and have tactility and definity: I am a stranger to them. You, my son, now observe me with your eyes and directly see my physicality and perceptible form. And yet, my son, I am now not understandable with those eyes.

[4] Father, you have stung the heart, causing no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself.

Would that you, my son, would - while not asleep - go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream.

Inform me also of this: who is the essentiator of the Palingenesis?

Through the desire of theos: The Mortal One, child of theos.

[5] Father, what you have now presented has silenced me, with a forsaking of what was previously in my heart <...> since I perceive that your stature and your likeness are still the same.

In that you have been deceived, for the form of the deathful alters every day: changed by the seasons, it grows then withers and so deceives.

[6] What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality?

My son: the imperturbable, the indistinguishable, the un-complexioned, the figureless, the steadfast, the unadorned, the revealed, the self-perceiving, the unwaveringly noble, the immaterial.

Father, I am completely confused. Just when I considered you were engendering learning in me, the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed.

Thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does, and

flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air. But how can you apprehend through perception what is insubstantial, what is not flowing, what is unmixturous, what is undissolved; that which is only apprehensible through influence and actusity, requiring someone able to apprehend that bringing-into-being within theos?

[7] Father, am I then deficient?

Not so, my son. Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being. Refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies.

Alastoras are within me, then, father?

Not just a few, my son, but many and terrifying.

I do not apprehend them, father.

My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity.

In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of.

[8] Henceforward, speak quietly, my son, and keep this secret. For thus may the generosity of theos toward us continue.

Henceforward, my son, be pleased, having refinement through the cræfts of theos to thus comprehend the Logos.

My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Theos. On arrival: Unknowing is banished. My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Delightfulness: on arriving, Grief runs away to those who have the room.

[9] The influence invoked following Delightfulness is Self-Restraint: a most pleasant influence. Let us, my son, readily welcome her: arriving, she immediately pushes Unrestraint aside.

The fourth invoked is Perseverance who is influxious against Lascivity. Which Grade, my son, is the foundation of Ancestral Custom: observe how without any deliberation Unfairness was cast out. My son, we are vindicated since Unfairness has departed.

The sixth influence invoked for us - against Coveter - is community. With that departed, the next invocation: Actualis, and thus - with Actualis presenced - does Deceit run away. Observe, my son, how with Actualis presenced and Envy absent, the noble has been returned. For, following Actualis, there is the noble, together with Life and Phaos.

No more does the retribution of Skotos supervene, for, vanquished, they whirlingly rush away.

[10] Thus, my son, you know the Way of Palingenesis. By the Dekad brought-into-being, geniture of apprehension was produced, banishing those twelve; and by this geniture we are of theos.

Thus whomsoever because of that generosity obtains divine geniture, having gone beyond physical perceptibility, discovers that they consist of such, and are pleased.

[11] With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere.

But speak to me about how the retributions of Skotos - which are twelve in number - are pushed aside by ten influences. What is that Way, Trismegistus?

[12] My son, this body which we have passed beyond is constituted from the circular Zodiac which is composed of beings, twelve in number and of the same physis, yet polymorphous in appearance so as to lead mortals astray. The difference between them, my son, becomes one when they act <...> Temerity united with Wroth, and indistinguishable.

It is probably correct to say that all of them withdraw when pushed away by those ten influences: that is, by the Dekad. For, my son, the Dekad is an effector of psyche, with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the Henad is brought forth from the pneuma. Thus it is reasonable that the Henad contains the Dekad and the Dekad the Henad.

[13] Father, I observe All That Exists, and myself, in the perceivance.

My son, this is the Palingenesis: to no more present the body in three separations, through this disclosure regarding Palingenesis, which I have written about for you alone so as not to be rouners of all these things to the many but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires.

[14] Inform me, father, if this body - constituted of such cræfts - is liable to dissipation.

Speak quietly and do not talk of deficiencies or you shall be in error with the eye of your perceivation disrespectful. The perceptible body of physis is far away from the quidditas of geniture, for one is dissipative, the other is not-dissipative; one is deathful, the other deathless.

Do you not know that you are engendered of theos, as a child of The One, as am I?

[15] Father, my inclination is for the laudation of the song you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad.

Just as, my son, Poemandres divined about the Ogdoad. It is noble of you to hasten to leave that dwelling for you are now refined. Poemandres, the perceivation of authority, did not impart to me anything other than what is written, understanding that I would apprehended the entirety; hearing what I was inclined to, observing the entirety, and entrusting me to presence the beautiful. Thus do all those influences within me chant.

Father, I desire to hear them so that I might apprehend.

[16] Be quiet my son: now hear that most fitting laudation, the song of Palingenesis which I had chosen not to openly divulge except to you at your completion and which is not taught but concealed through silence.

Thus, my son, on your feet in a place open to the air look respectfully to the Southwind as Helios descends, as at the ascending and toward the Eastwind.

Be quiet my son.

### Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song

[17] Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.  
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;  
Trees: do not incurvate;  
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,  
For All That Exists, and for The One.

Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.  
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.  
For I shall sing of the maker of everything;  
Of who established the Earth,  
Of who affixed the Heavens,

Of who decreed that Oceanus should bring forth sweet water  
To where was inhabited and where was uninhabited  
To so sustain all mortals;  
Of who decreed that Fire should bring light  
To divinities and mortals for their every use.

Let us all join in fond celebration of who is far beyond the Heavens:  
That artisan of every Physis.

May the one who is the eye of perceivration accept this fond celebration  
From my Arts.

[18] Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists  
As I desire all those Arts within me to blend, together.

Numinous knowledge, from you a numinal understanding:  
Through you, a song of apprehended phaos,  
Delighted with delightful perceivrance.  
Join me, all you Arts, in song.

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,  
Through me sing of such respect.  
Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:  
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,  
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusosity of those my Arts.  
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actuosities;  
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.  
Through me, may Kosmos accept  
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

[19] Such is what the Arts within me loudly call out. They sing of All That Exists;  
they accomplish your desire. From you: deliberations; then to you, from All That  
Exists.

Accept from Kosmos - the Kosmos within us - respectful wordful offerings. Life,  
recure! Phaos, reveal! Theos, spiritus! For - Breath-Giver, Artisan - it is your  
Logos that Perceivration guides.

[20] You are theos. Your mortal loudly calls out: through Fire, through Air,  
through Earth, through Water, through Pneuma, through your created beings.

To me, from your Aion, a laudation. And, through your deliberations, I  
discovered the repose that I seek. Because of your desire, I perceived.



[21] Father, I also have assigned the laudation you spoke of to my Kosmos.

My son, speak of "in the apprehended."

In the apprehended I am able to do, father. For me, through your song and your laudation, a more numinal perceivance. And yet, there is a desire for me to convey from my own heart a laudation to theos.

My son, do not be incautious.

Father, what I behold in the perceivance, I say. It is to theos, to you - essentiator of engenderment - that I, Thoth, convey wordful offerings. Theos, you the Father; you the Kyrios, you the Perceivance, accept the respectful wordful offerings you desire. For, by your deliberations, all is accomplished.

My son, you convey an agreeable offering to theos, father of all. But you should add "through the Logos."

[22] My thanks to you, father, for your advice regarding the invocation.

My son, I am glad that the actuality has borne good fruit, the unrottable produce. Having learned of this from me, profess silence my son about this wonder, revealing to no one the tradition of the Palingenesis, for otherwise we will be regarded as rouners. Each of us has had a sufficiency of interest: I in speaking, you in listening. Through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father

ooo

### **Commentary**

#### **Title.**

Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν όρει λόγος απόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγής επαγγελίας. On A Mountain: Hermes Trismegistus To His Son Thoth, An Esoteric Discourse Concerning Palingenesis And The Requirement of Silence.

*Thoth.* As in other tractates I translate Τάτ by Thoth, avoiding the conventional *Tat* which, in English, has a colloquial meaning inappropriate here. As to which 'Thoth' is meant, the consensus is that in this and some other tractates it refers to the son (possibly biologically or more probably metaphorically) of Hermes

Trismegistus who himself was named by the Greeks as Thoth, with the Τάτ of some other tractates being a scribal corruption of the name Thoth.

*Esoteric Discourse.* λόγος απόκρυφος. While 'esoteric' is an apt translation in regard to απόκρυφος, 'discourse' is not entirely satisfactory in respect of λόγος since it could be here interpreted to mean 'disclosure' or 'explanation'. However, given what follows in section 1 - πυθομένου τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν...παραδιδόναι μοι - 'discourse' seems appropriate.

*Palingenesis.* Rather than ascribe a particular meaning to παλιγγενεσία - such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' - I have chosen the English word palingenesis (from the Latin palingenesia) with that term explained by what follows in this particular discourse, qv. vv. 12 and 13.

*Requirement.* The sense of ἐπαγγελία here, given what is discussed in this tractate, is 'requirement' rather than the strident 'command' or what is implied by the rather vague word 'promise'.

## 1.

*Father.* The Greek ὦ πάτερ - literally 'my father' - is a polite form of address, akin to the English 'sir'. Similarly, ὦ τέκνον - 'my son' - is a polite reply. Given the esoteric nature of the text, a possible interpretation here of ὦ πάτερ would be 'Master', and of ὦ τέκνον 'my pupil'.

*in the Exoterica.* Ἐν τοῖς γενικοῖς. Since the term γενικῶν λόγων occurs in tractate X it is reasonable to assume that γενικός here refers to the same thing although the meaning of the term is moot given that no details are provided in this tractate nor in tractate X, nor in Stobaeus (Excerpts, III, 1 and VI, 1) where the terms also occurs. While most translators have assumed that it refers to 'generic' things or 'generalities' and thus (by adding λόγοι) have opted for an expression such as 'General Discourses', and given that a transliteration - such as genikois or genikoi - is awkward, I have in respect of the γενικοὶ opted for exoterica (from the Latin via the Greek τὰ ἐξωτερικά) with the meaning of "exoteric treatises designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples or students," with the plausible suggestion thus being that there are exoteric Hermetic treatises and esoteric Hermetic treatises, with Reitzenstein describing these other treatises as διεξοδικοί λόγοι (R.A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres*. Teubner, Leipzig. 1904. p.118) a distinction he also mentioned in his later work *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*.

*passing over the mountain.* I follow the MSS and read μεταβάσεως rather than the emendation καταβάσεως, taking the sense of μεταβάσεως here as "passing over" - walking on and over - the mountain. There seems no need for the emendation - which implies a descent from the mountain - with its possible suggestion of something more symbolic, more religious or mystical, having

occurred, as for example might be implied in the Gospel of John with the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη in chapter one vv.12-13, with Thomas Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, Caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended."

*the discourse on palingenesis*. The Greek word translated here as 'discourse' is λόγος, as in the title.

*imparted to me*. παραδίδωμι carries the sense here of 'handing down' - of transmitting, disclosing - some ancestral teaching or wisdom; a disclosing from master to pupil.

*separated from the world*. In respect of ἀπαλλοτριόω what is implied is not 'alienated' from (which has too many modern connotations) the world (κόσμος), but rather 'separate' - distanced - from the world, from worldly things, as a mystic is often 'otherworldly' and may seem to be - to others, and to themselves - a stranger in the world.

*distancing my ethos*. Reading ἀπηλλοτριώσα (with Parthey, et al) not the emendation of Nock (ἀπηνδρείωσα) with φρόνημα here suggestive of one's character and especially of one's "way of thinking", one's weltanschauung: that is, the 'spirit' or ethos which guides one's way of life.

*treachery*. ἀπάτης. Personified in Hesiod's Theogony as a child of Night (Νύξ) along with "darksome Kir and Death" - Κῆρα μέλαιναν καὶ Θάνατον - and Nemesis, Νέμεσις.

*rectify my insufficiencies*. τὰ ὑστερήματα ἀναπλήρωσον. An alternative, literal, translation would be "supply what is needed."

*since you said you would impart Palingenesis to me*. Given the somewhat unusual phrasing here - οἷς ἔφη μοι παλιγγενεσίας παραδοῦναι, which led Nock to add γένεσιν after παλιγγενεσίας - it seems that παλιγγενεσίας is the title given to a particular doctrine or esoteric theory rather than just a term such as 'rebirth'. Hence my capitalization.

*what source ... what sown*. The metaphysical context - and the reply - suggests that both μήτρας and σποράς are meant metaphorically rather than literally

(womb, seed).

*mortal*. As in other tractates I translate ἄνθρωπος as 'mortal' rather than as 'man'. Which here - as in other tractates - suits both the Hellenic context, of mortals contrasted with the immortal theos and the immortal theoi, and the metaphysical context of immortality being possibly attainable by select mortals.

## 2.

*noetic sapientia*. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term *noetic sapientia* to denote σοφία νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, qv. *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερὰ may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin *sapientia* in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in the Poemandres tractate *sapientia* (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceivation - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, *noetic sapientia* implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotatum whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, qv. the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken

or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

*genuine*. In respect of ἀληθινός as 'genuine', cf. Poemandres 30, ἀληθινὴ ὅρασις.

*noble*. Regarding ἀγαθός as 'noble/nobility/honour', qv. my commentary on Poemandres 22 and my essays *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* and *Cicero On Summum Bonum*.

*of whom dispersed*. To express the meaning of the Greek, to avoid gender bias and because of the following παῖς, I have here used the plural rather than the singular, those avoiding expressions such as "I do not share/he does not share" and "he that is begotten of theos." This also has the advantage of avoiding a misapprehension such as "the begotten one will be different, a god, a son of god."

*the desire of theos*. In respect of θέλημα here, qv. v.18, συνάσατε τῷ θελήματί μου πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις.

*quidditas*. οὐσία. As at tractates XI:2 and VI:1, quidditas is a more appropriate translation of οὐσία rather than either 'essence' or 'substance'. Quidditas is post-classical Latin, from whence the English word quiddity, and here as in those tractates should be understood as a philosophical term requiring contextual interpretation. One possible interpretation of quidditas here as at VI:1 is 'the being of that being/entity', with such quidditas often presented in - and perceived via or as - φύσις (physis).

*such a perceiviation*. I have followed the MSS and translated καὶ τῆς νοητῆς, omitted by Nock et al. In respect of νοητῆς, cf. Plutarch on the views of Krantor of Soli regarding psyche: μιγνύντι τὴν ψυχὴν ἐκ τε τῆς νοητῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ τὰ αἰσθητὰ δοξαστῆς φύσεως (De Anima Procreatione in Timaeo, 1).

In respect of νοῦς as perceiviation/perceivance, qv. my commentary on the Poemandres tractate.

*entirely whole*. τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί. A literal translation - "the all in all" - does not in its blandness (and the fact that "all in all" is a colloquialism) convey the meaning of the Greek, which considering what follows is suggestive of "entirely whole."

*mixture of all abilities*. ἐκ πασῶν δυνάμεων συνεστώς. Mixture - a variant spelling of mixtion, meaning melded, compounded, combined, composed of - is most suitable for συνεστώς given the metaphysical matters discussed.

*a teacher to a pupil*. ὃ τέκνον and ὃ πάτερ not here literally referring to how a father should converse with his son but rather to a teacher instructing a pupil,

with the pupil expecting the teacher to explain matters clearly rather than by means of riddles.

*emanation.* I incline toward the view that γένος (which is literally, 'kind', species, race, folk, breed) is used here as a technical term which - given what follows, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναμνησέσθαι, and the fact that it is not feasible for one mortal to impart knowledge about it to another mortal - here implies a particular 'emanation' of theos; a knowing of which one has to, as Hermes goes on to describe, experience for it to be properly understood. Such 'emanations of theos' are described in the Poemandres tractate where they are symbolized by a septenary system and the two "immortal" (acausal) realms which await for mortals beyond those seven spheres, with knowledge of these emanations being acquired by the ἀνοδος (anados, the upward journey) from the deathful realms to the realms of the deathless.

The term emanation also has the advantage of connotating the literal meaning of γένος since an 'emanation' is derived from a particular kind, breed, or lineage.

*presenced.* The term 'presenced' is from the noun 'presencing' (derived from the Latin praesentia) and means "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established."

ἀναμνησκω is a very interesting word to use and one which has a variety of meanings depending on context, and thus does not always impute something to do with either 'mind' or with 'memory' as those English terms are now often understood with their implications of those 'things' having some sort of an existence 'somewhere' - in the case of 'memory' as a faculty of the 'mind' - and/or as quantifiable 'things'.

In the world of ancient heroes and warriors, as evoked by Homer, it is simply a 'mentioning' of something:

ὦ φίλ', ἐπεὶ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνέμνησας καὶ ἔειπες,  
φασὶ μνηστῆρας σῆς μητέρος εἶνεκα πολλοὺς  
ἐν μεγάροις ἀέκητι σέθεν κακὰ μηχανάσθαι

My friend - since you have, in speaking to me, mentioned this,  
There are indeed rumours of many suitors for your mother being in your home  
Against your will who are plotting to do you harm.

(Homer, The Odyssey, Book III, 321-323)

In Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles it implies a 'seeing again' of things past:

ἀλλ' ἐγὼ σαφῶς  
ἀγνώτ' ἀναμνήσω νιν. εὔ γὰρ οἶδ' ὅτι  
κάτοιδεν, ἦμος τῷ Κιθαιρῶνος τόπῳ,

ὁ μὲν διπλοῖσι ποιμνίοις, ἐγὼ δ' ἐνί,  
ἐπλησίαζον τῷδε τάνδρῃ τρεῖς ὅλους  
ἔξ ἥρος εἰς ἀρκτοῦρον ἐκμήνους χρόνους

But I shall bring light  
Upon those things which are now unknown. For well do I know  
That he will see again that region of Cithaeron when he  
With a double flock and I with one  
Were neighbours and comrades for three entire six month  
Durations from Spring to Arcturus.

(1131-1137)

In this tractate, the implication of ἀναμιμνήσκω is of theos - literally, given the definite article, τοῦ θεοῦ, *the theos* - presencing in the mortal (and thus gifting them with) the required understanding/knowledge of the emanation, just as theos has gifted mortals with sentience, cf. θεοῦ δωρεᾶς in IV:5, ἐλλόγιμος in tractate XI:7 and Asclepius 16, "Prouisum cautumque est, quantum rationabiliter potuisset a summo deo, tunc cum sensu, disciplina, intellegentia mentes hominum est munerare dignatus. Hisce enim rebus, quibus ceteris antestamus animalibus."

### 3.

*unshaped*. ἄπλαστον. A privation of πλάσσω, hence 'without invention, pretence, form; not manufactured, unadorned, unfashioned, without shape.' Cf. the irony of Lucian in *De Morte Peregrini* 10, πηλὸς γὰρ ἔτι ἄπλαστος ἦν καὶ οὐδέπω ἐντελὲς ἄγαλμα ἡμῖν δεδομιούργητο, for he was then formless clay with that glorious depiction not yet complete.

What is unshaped (form-less) is the vista - the view - seen, with there being no need, in my view, to impute that Hermes is here speaking of having had a 'vision', mystical, prophetic, or otherwise, given that a 'vision' is not by its nature of what is 'form-less' but of some-thing or some-things perceived and which therefore, being seen, have form or forms, qv. the mention of οὐδὲ τῷ πλαστῷ τούτῳ στοιχείῳ and of εἶδος which follow.

*through the generosity of theos*. ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ. Literally, "from the generosity of theos." Considering the metaphysical context, I incline toward the view that ἐλέος here is neither mercy - qv. Oedipus Tyrannus 672, ἐποικτίρω στόμα ἐλεινόν οὗτος δ' ἐνθ' ἂν ἡ στυγήσεται - nor 'pity' (cf. Oedipus Tyrannus 180, νηλέα δὲ γένεθλα πρὸς πέδῳ θαναταφόρα κεῖται ἀνοίκτως) but rather 'generosity' in the sense of Matthew 12:7, τί ἐστὶν Ἐλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν, "I seek generosity and not sacrifice" with such 'generosity' (of deed and spirit) not exactly the same as what the word 'compassion' now implies, given the post-Hellenic and especially the contemporary connotations of the word 'compassion'.

*setting forth ... engendered by perceivation.* καὶ ἐμαυτὸν ἐξελήλυθα εἰς ἀθάνατον σῶμα, καὶ εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, ἀλλ' ἐγεννήθην ἐν νῶ. This passage is usually interpreted in a way which suggests that Hermes is describing some kind of ancient 'astral travel' where he goes "out of himself" and thence "into" a deathless body, ἀθάνατον σῶμα (in respect of θάνατος and ἀθάνατος as deathful and deathless, qv. my commentary on Poemandres 14 and on vv. 1 and 2 of tractate XI).

However, I take the passage more literally, especially given the phrase εἰμι νῦν οὐχ ὁ πρίν, "now I am not the/that before," and the mention of having been produced/engendered/grown by perceivation. That is, Hermes has "seen" - intuitively perceived, had an insight into - what deathlessness means and implies and is not the person he was before, having acquired (or been given, by theos) the gift of understanding that perceivation engenders, for as mentioned in tractate IV:4

βάπτισον σεαυτὴν ἢ δυναμένη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἀνελεύσῃ πρὸς τὸν καταπέμψαντα τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ γνωρίζουσα ἐπὶ τί γέγονας. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν συνῆκαν τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ ἐβάπτισαντο τοῦ νοός, οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τέλειοι ἐγένοντο ἄνθρωποι, τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι

If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron  
Should you accept you can ascend -  
Having discovered how you came-into-being -  
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.  
The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceivation  
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals  
Through having received the perceivation

*shaped part.* A direct contrast with the previous use of πλάσσω in respect of what was seen.

*thus and for me there is no concern for the initial mixturous form.* διὸ καὶ ἡμέληταί μοι τὸ πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος. What there is no concern for is the causal form (εἶδος) of the mortal body, mixturous and formful as it is (in respect of mixturous, qv. the note on *mixture* in v. 2) and given that such an initial form will, by palingenesis, be changed.

*not as if.* Reading οὐχ ὅτι with the MSS; literally, "not as though." Cf. John 6:46 οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις.

*biochrome ... definity.* I take κέχρωσμαι καὶ ἀφὴν ἔχω καὶ μέτρον, ἀλλότριος δὲ τούτων εἰμί metaphorically, not literally, with (i) κέχρωσμαι implying not colour per se but rather biochromy, the natural or the apparent (observed) colouration of living beings, and (ii) μέτρον suggestive not of "measure" but rather of 'definity' in reference to 'indefinity' (from the noun indefinitude) and thus implying, in this context, 'beyond being definable' by ordinary, causal, means



such as 'measure' and 'weight' and 'determinability' and 'definement'.

*and directly see my physicality and perceptible form.* While various emendations have been suggested for the readings of the MSS here, including δέ εἰμι between ὅ τι δέ and κατανοεῖς, the general meaning seems clear: to directly see or fix or to concentrate one's eyes, one's gaze on (ἀτενίζω) the outward form (εἶδος) which here is the body, the physical appearance, the physicality of the person.

But, as Hermes goes on to explain - οὐκ ὀφθαλμοῖς τούτοις θεωροῦμαι νῦν - what is so observed by the physical eyes does not provide an understanding - a perception, a seeing - of what he is now as a result of the "unshaped vista" that he, through the generosity of theos, saw of himself "setting forth to a deathless body." In respect of θεωρέω, cf. John 4:19, λέγει αὐτῷ ἡ γυνή, Κύριε, θεωρῶ ὅτι προφήτης εἶ σύ, "the woman said to him: Sir, I deem you are a prophet."

#### 4.

*Father, you have stung the heart, plunging me into no minor distraction, for I cannot now perceive myself.* Εἰς μανίαν με οὐκ ὀλίγην καὶ οἷστροισιν φρενῶν ἐνέσεισας, ὦ πάτερ· ἐμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ.

My translation is quite different from previous ones - such as Copenhaver's "you have driven me quite mad, father, and you have deranged my heart. Now I do not see myself" - for the following reasons.

i) Does μανία, in the context of this particular tractate, equate to what the English terms 'mania' and 'madness' now denote, as for example - in the case of mania - in 'obsessive need or enthusiasm', 'mood disorder', and - in the case of madness - 'mental illness', psychosis, lack of restraint, uncontrollable fury, uncontrollable mental turmoil, or even in the colloquial sense of 'cool' or quirkily interesting?

It is my considered opinion that it does not, but rather denotes what is suggested by Acts 26:24-25 especially given the use there of μαίνομαι,

Ταῦτα δὲ αὐτοῦ ἀπολογουμένου ὁ Φῆστος μεγάλη τῇ φωνῇ φησὶν Μαίνῃ, Παῦλε· τὰ πολλὰ σε γράμματα εἰς μανίαν περιτρέπει. ὁ δὲ Παῦλος Οὐ μαίνομαι, φησὶν, κράτιστε Φῆστε, ἀλλὰ ἀληθείας καὶ σωφροσύνης ῥήματα ἀποφθέγγομαι.

Speaking up for himself, Festus, in a very loud voice, said: "Paul, you are distracted. Your extensive learning has brought you to distraction." But Paul replied: "Noble Festus, I am not beside myself for the words I have spoken are restrained and truthful."

ii) In respect of οἴστροισιν I am rather reminded of the usage of οἴστρομα in Oedipus Tyrannus, 1318,

οἴμοι μάλ' αὖθις: οἶον εἰσέδου μ' ἅμα κέντρων τε τῶνδ' οἴστρομα καὶ μνήμη κακῶν

as do the stings of those goads, and the recalling of those troubles, pierce me

where the transitive senses of *goad* include "to cause annoyance or discomfort; to spur someone on, or 'to sting' or to prod someone to provoke them into responding."

Thus, with φρήν taken as a metaphor for the heart, one has the contextually apposite *stung the heart*, rather than completely out of context phrases such as "mind frenzy" or "mad".

iii) ἔμαυτὸν γὰρ νῦν οὐχ ὁρῶ. Not a literal 'cannot see' but rather 'cannot comprehend who or what I - as a being - am,' as a consequence of what Hermes has just said about his own being. Hence, *I cannot now perceive myself*.

*go beyond*. In respect of διεξελέλυθας, not here implying to "pass through", or "come out" (of yourself) but "go - or pass - beyond" (yourself) as those sleepfully dreaming often in their dreams travel far beyond where they are sleeping.

*essentiator*. The entity, person, or divinity, who essentiate; that is, who is the genesis of, who is the essence of, and who gives being to - who 'authors' and who fashions - the Palingenesis. Which 16th century English word expresses the meaning here of the Greek term γενεσιουργός. Cf. δημιουργός - 'artisan' - in Poemandres 24.

*The Mortal One, child of theos*. Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, ἄνθρωπος εἷς, θελήματι θεοῦ. In respect of ἄνθρωπος εἷς, literally, *Essentialist Mortal*. That is, the primatial, or 'archetypal', human being. In respect of Ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ παῖς, cf. v. 2: τοῦ θελήματος τοῦ θεοῦ...ὁ γεννώμενος θεοῦ θεὸς παῖς, with παῖς not restricted to 'son' but implying the child - and hence the children, the youthful - of *the* theos, with the conventional translation here of 'son of god' imposing a particular meaning on the text and thus inviting as it may unwarranted comparisons with aspects of Christian theology.

5.

*silenced*. In regard to ἀφασίαν, qv. Euripides, Helen, 548-9,

ὥς δέμας δείξασα σὸν ἑκπληξιν ἡμῖν ἀφασίαν τε προστίθης

I am mortified, silenced, by you imposing such a bodily appearance upon me

*in my heart <...> since I perceive.* It is possible that Reitzenstein's assumption - in *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927 - of a lacuna here is correct, although it is perhaps more probable to interpret what Thoth has just said - that he perceives the stature and the features of Hermes are still the same - accounts for him "forsaking what was previously in his heart," because he now believes that Hermes was speaking metaphorically in regard to being a stranger to "tactility and definitivity." Which is why, after the reply from Hermes, Thoth goes on to ask τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν (what, then, is the actuality) and then, after the reply from Hermes, says Μέμνηνα ὄντως.

*the seasons.* As elsewhere, χρόνος is not some abstract 'time' but rather the duration or durations between certain observable events or changes, often measured by such things as the phases of the moon or by the appearance or disappearance of constellations or certain stars in the night sky. Here, it refers to the seasons of Nature and how, over the seasons, mortals - and crops - grow then wither.

## 6.

*What then - Trismegistus - is the actuality?* Τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν, ὦ Τρισμέγιστε. In respect of ἀλήθεια I have - as in translations of other Hermetic tractates, such as Poemandres 31 and XI:1 - eschewed the conventional translation of 'truth' (with its implication of some abstract, impersonal, and disputable, meaning) in favour of a contextual interpretation, mindful as I am of John 18:38 - τί ἐστιν ἀλήθεια, Quid est veritas? - which well expresses a Greco-Roman sentiment.

The English term is derived from the classical Latin *actualis* and, in this context, refers to what is real, what has actual being or is a demonstrable fact.

*the un-complexioned...the unmaterial.* There are two ways of construing what follows. As an impersonal list of philosophical attributes - such as formless, colourless - or metaphorically as personal qualities associated with or relevant to the quest for palingenesis, and while most translators have chosen the first option I incline toward the view that, given the personal context - of what Hermes has said, "directly see my physicality," and about how "the form of the deathful alters every day" - they signify personal qualities. These personal qualities, such as τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον and τὸ ἀσώματον are echoed in the *De Imaginibus Oratio* of Iohannes Damascenus (written c. 730 CE) when he enumerates the qualities of God.

Here, and for example,

i) *the un-complexioned.* τὸ ἀχρώματον, γν. ἄχρους, the opposite of εὐχρους, cf. Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, Book VIII, 1.41 ὡς εὐχρωώτεροι ὀρώντο ἢ πεφύκασιν. An alternative to 'un-complexioned' would be 'hueless'.

ii) *the figureless*. τὸ ἀσχημάτιστον. That is, of no particular physique. Qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, 94). Cf. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, Book VIII, 3.59, sunt inornata et haec: quod male dispositum est, id ἀνοικονόμητον, quod male figuratum, id ἀσχημάτιστον quod male collocatum.

iii) *the unadorned*. τὸ γυμνόν. Not literally 'naked' or unclothed, but a metaphor for 'unadorned'.

iv) *the revealed*. τὸ φαῖνον. While the literal sense here is problematic - cf. Herodotus, II, 71.1, χαυλιόδοντας φαῖνον, and Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus* 1229, τὰ δ' αὐτίκ' εἰς τὸ φῶς φανεῖ, "soon to be exposed to the light" - what seems to be suggested metaphorically is 'the visible', 'the (already) revealed', and thus someone who is conspicuously (luminously) open and honest and has nothing to hide that might, to their detriment, be exposed. Cf. τὸν ἐπιτάξαντα πῦρ φανῆναι in v. 17 and the quotation there from Plato, *Timaeus*, 39b.

v) *the self-perceiving*. τὸ αὐτῷ καταληπτόν. That is, the self-apprehended, the self-aware, person.

vi) *the unwaveringly noble*. τὸ ἀναλλοίωτον ἀγαθόν. Qv. τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθόν, ὕμναι in v. 18.

vii) *the unmaterial*. τὸ ἀσώματον. The personal sense is well-expressed in a 14th century translation of 'De Proprietatibus Rerum' in which the qualities of an angel are explained: "inasmuch as he is farre from the bondage of earthly matter, insomuch he is the more perfect in contemplation of spirituall and unmateriall thinges." (Book I, ii. ii. 60). In respect of the term as applied to God, qv. Iohannes Damascenus, *De Imaginibus Oratio* I: 4. Cf. Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, V, 15, 1-4,

Vetus atque perpetua quaestio inter nobilissimos philosophorum agitata est, corpusne sit vox an incorporeum. Hoc enim vocabulum quidam finxerunt proinde quod Graece dicitur ἀσώματον. Corpus autem est quod aut efficient est aut patiens; id Graece definitur τὸ ἦτοι ποιοῦν ἢ πάσχον. Quam definitionem significare volens, Lucretius poeta ita scripsit: Tangere enim aut tangi, nisi corpus, nulla potest res.

*I am completely confused*. Μέμνηνα ὄντως. Just as in v. 4, the context does not support Thoth saying - even rhetorically - something such as "I have gone mad" or "I am really deranged" considering what the English words "mad" and "deranged" now impute. The sense here - given what follows, ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος - is rather of being completely confused, befuddled, and thus lost because of what Hermes has just said. Cf. John 10:20, Δαιμόνιον ἔχει καὶ μαίνεται τί αὐτοῦ ἀκούετε - "why listen to him? He bears a

daemon and is not himself" - with its suggestion that not only is the person completely confused but also that it is not him who is speaking (or, more probably, not he who is ranting) but the daemon he carries around and thus is "possessed" by.

*the perceptibility of my apprehension was obstructed.* ἐνεφράχθησαν αἱ αἰσθήσεις τούτου μου τοῦ νοήματος. Although the Greek is somewhat obscure, the general sense is that his perception - his understanding - of what he thought Hermes was explaining is now gone, having been obstructed, lost, because of his confusion.

*and flows, as Water does, and is neumæos as is Air.* The meaning here of ὑγρός and σύμπνοος are uncertain, with the context, the mention of elemental Fire, Earth, Water, and Air, perhaps indicative of them being technical (esoteric) hermetic terms rather than having their normal (exoteric) meaning of 'moist/wet' and 'breathing together' respectively.

i) In regard to ὑγρός, qv. Poemandres 4, where the context - ἀφάτως τετραγμένην καὶ καπνὸν ἀποδι δοῦσαν - implies flowing, Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 314 - ταῦτ' ἄρ' ἐποίουν ὑγρᾶν Νεφελᾶν στρεπταιγλᾶν δάιον ὁρμάν - where clouds are described as flowing and in their flowing-moving obscure the brightness (of the day).

ii) In regard to σύμπνοος, qv. *Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης* attributed to Plutarch - τὸ φύσει διοικεῖσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον σύμπνοον καὶ συμπαθῇ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ ὄντα (574e) - literally meaning that the Kosmos is συμπαθῇ with itself and mutually breathing (σύμπνοος), with the implication that it is a wholistic living being. Hence, here - given such a conjectured esoteric meaning as "breathfully connected" - a suitable interpretation of καὶ σύμπνοον ὡς ἀήρ would be *and is as breathfully connected as Air*, with 'breath' indicative of πνεῦμα as described in Poemandres 5 and XII:18.

However, a better alternative might be to provide a suitable technical term, open to interpretation, to express whatever esoteric meaning of σύμπνοος is conjectured, with my suggestion being neumæos, from the medieval Latin neumæ using the suffix -os derived from the Greek -ός, with one possible interpretation therefore being 'something' possibly pertaining to πνεῦμα', giving thus the translation *and is neumæos, as is Air*.

*insubstantial.* τὸ μὴ σκληρόν does not imply the literal what "is not hard" but rather the metaphorical what is 'insubstantial', whose form is thus not solid, not firm, but non-substantial and which therefore cannot be correctly known through touch and sight.

*unmixturous.* The meaning of ἀσφίγγωτος is unclear since it occurs only here, with suggestions ranging from 'not fastened', 'not bound', 'not tight', and 'loose'. However, I am inclined to accept Scott's emendation of ἀσύνητον - qv. τὸ

πρῶτον σύνθετον εἶδος (the initial mixturous/composed form) in v. 3 - giving thus unmixturous, not composite.

*undissolved*. Reading διαλυόμενον with Parthey et al.

*actusosity*. ἐνέργεια. Qv. tractate XII:21. The English term actusosity derives from the classical Latin actuosus and expresses the Greek here better than the word 'energy' given the modern connotations of that word. The meaning is of (often vigorous) activity or occurrences either natural or which result from the actions of divinities or daimons or mortals.

*that bringing-into-being within theos*. τὴν ἐν θεῷ γένεσιν. Cf. Poemandres 26, ἐν θεῷ γίνονται. Both imply a "uniting with theos" to thus 'become-of' what is no longer mortal but rather both deathless and 'of theos'.

7.

*Refine yourself*. As often in other hermetic tractates - qv. Poemandres 10, 22, and VI:3 - καθαρός signifies not just the literal 'physically clean' but being 'refined' in terms of appearance, behaviour, manners, cleanliness, speech, learning, and thought.

*brutish*. Given the metaphysical context, and the contrast with καθαρός, ἄλογος implies more than 'irrational' or 'unreasonable'. The sense is of the unrefined, the uncultured, the brutish.

*alastoras*. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὧ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish alastoras of Materies," using the English term alastoras - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

*materies*. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

*unknowing*. In respect of ἀγνοέω here, 'unknowing' is a more suitable English word than 'ignorance', given its meaning, usage (past - as in the *Cloud of*

*Unknowing* - and present) and given the context. Cf. Poemandres 27, ἀγνωσίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, and Poemandres 32, ἐν ἀγνοίᾳ τοῦ γένους.

*Vengerisse*. A personification here in respect of one of the alastoras, rather than impersonally assumptive words such as 'torment/punishment' which in my opinion do not fully express the ethos of the Greek. *Vengerisse* is an alternative spelling of *Vengeress*: a woman who exacts vengeance, who does deeds of retribution; from the Latin *vindicare* via the Anglo-Norman *venger* whence the word *vengeance*. The spelling *vengerisse* occurs in Chaucer's 1374 translation of *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

The personifications which follow - ἄγνοια, ἀκρασία, κ.τ.λ. - designate (i) the particular deed or deeds that the alastor in question has arrived to avenge, and/or (ii) the character trait or traits which has or have drawn that particular alastor to a person in order to torment them and exact vengeance, retribution.

In the case of ἄγνοια, the suggestion therefore seems to be that this is wilful unknowing, born out of arrogance.

*Unrestraint*. ἀκρασία. In relation to a person, the Greek means 'lack of control' and thus implies someone who cannot restrain themselves and thus who is self-indulgent; and it is somewhat unfortunate that some translators have opted here to use the word 'incontinence' given what that English word imputes in medical terms.

*Unfairness*. In respect of δίκη as fairness, and personified as a goddess, cf. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, 213-218,

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

*Putridity*. The Greco-Roman sense of κακία is personal, not abstract, imputing rottenness: a rotten, putrid, bad physis (character, nature, disposition). This bad physis is revealed by personal deeds, such as cowardice, malice, corruption, depravity, and hubris.

*inner mortal.* ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρω. In respect of ἐνδιάθετος, an alternative to 'inner' would be 'enclosed', with the Greek word occurring in relation to Stoic philosophy where a distinction was sometimes made (qv. Theophilus of Antioch) between λόγος ἐνδιάθετος (the inner or 'esoteric' logos) and λόγος προφορικός (the outer or 'exoteric' logos).

*incarcerated.* The Greek word used, δεσμωτήριον, is interesting as it does not imply a 'prison' as the word prison is mostly conceived of today, a large building in which people are confined together. Composed as the Greek is from δεσμός (bonds, shackles) and τηρέω (watch, guard) it signifies a place where a person is guarded and shackled, as for example in medieval dungeons. Occurring as the word does in conjunction with σῶμα (body) and ἀναγκάζω (compel, using force including torture) the suggestion seems to be of the alastoras tormenting or torturing a person while that person is confined, incarcerated, within their mortal body. Cf. John 3:24, βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν, which implies a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into a guarded cage, not "cast into prison."

*generous.* Qv. the comment on ἐξ ἐλέου θεοῦ in v. 3.

*which is what the way and logos of Palingenesis consists of.* καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος. Literally, "and thus consists the way and logos of the Palingenesis." Since the meaning of λόγος here is a matter of conjecture, I have transliterated it, although I incline toward the view that here it is used as a metaphysical term as in the Poemandres, as for example in v. 9, λόγῳ ἑτέρου Νοῦν δημιουργόν, "whose logos brought forth another perceiviation," and as in Cyrilli Epistula Tertia ad Nestorium:

μονογενὴς τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος ὁ ἐξ αὐτῆς γεννηθεὶς τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ πατρὸς ὁ ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ θεὸς ἀληθινός τὸ φῶς τὸ ἐκ τοῦ φωτός ὁ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῇ

only-offspring of the logos of theos, born from the essence [οὐσία] of the father, genuine theos from genuine theos, the phaos from the phaos, by whom all things in heaven and on Earth came into being

## 8.

*Speak quietly...and keep this secret.* σιώπησον...καὶ εὐφήμησον. Not a literal 'keep silent and do not say anything' since it is a formulaic phrase, with εὐφημέω suggestive of 'speak softly/quietly' due to either religious reverence (cf. VIII:5, XIII:8, κ.τ.λ.) or personal politeness/deference, and with σιωπάω suggestive of 'keep secret'.

*Henceforward be pleased.* The English word 'rejoice' - in respect of χαίρω - is



unsuitable here given the preceding εὐφημέω, and the association of the word with Christian worship past and present where it implies 'exult' and show/feel 'great joy'.

*having refinement through the Cræfts of theos.* ἀνακαθαίρο μενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν. Regarding καθαρός as implying 'refinement', qv. the comment on v. 7.

Cræft - the older spelling, meaning, and pronunciation of craft - is, when so spelled, appropriate in reference to the use of δύναμις in this tractate, implying as it does, in an exoteric context, what the terms strength/power/force denote, while implying in an esoteric context (as often in this tractate) a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned in the traditional manner from a master or from a mistress of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte, that can be taught and learned. A Cræft is thus - for an individual - an ability, a capability, while it can also be, in respect of others, influential.

Thus, in this and other tractates the context can suggest alternatives such as 'influence' - qv. v. 9 in respect of the Alastoras, and tractate III:3 - or 'capability', qv. XI:3 and XII:20.

The word cræft also has the advantage of implying the plural, such as in the expression "the Cræft of theos."

*comprehend.* Considering the preceding σιῶπησον the sense of ἀρθρόω here is not the literal 'articulate' the logos (by means of words spoken) but rather to be able to articulate it interiorly, clearly, and thus comprehend it for oneself.

*arrivance.* In respect of the unusual - but metaphysically appropriate - English word 'arrivance', cf. Luke 19:10, ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός, "the arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost."

*knowledge.* γνῶσις. Cf. Poemandres 26, τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ ἀγαθὸν τέλος τοῖς γνῶσιν ἐσχηκόσι, and also γνῶσις ἀγία in v. 18 here, where the Greek might usefully be transliterated as gnosis.

*knowledge of Delightfulness.* Cf. v. 18: διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν φῶς ὑμῶν χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ, through you, a song of apprehended phaos, delighted with delightful perceivance.

## 9.

*influxious.* Derived from 'influxion' - one of which meanings is 'influence' - and denoting a powerful influence, as in the 17th century book *England's Teares For*

*The Present Warres* by James Howell, "the Moon hath an influxious power."

*Grade.* βαθμός. It is possible that this is a technical - esoteric - term which could also be translated as 'degree' indicative as the term seems to be of some mystical progression by a supplicant or initiate. However, the tractate does not provide any evidence as to what such a progression was from and to, or what the other grades might have been.

*Ancestral Custom.* δικαιοσύνη. The meaning is not 'righteousness', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty toward both the gods and other mortals. This Hellenic - this personal - meaning derives from understanding δίκη personified as the goddess of both Fairness *and of* Tradition (Ancestral Custom) with 'fairness' a more apt description of the word δίκη, given that terms such as justice and judgement have acquired, over millennia, abstract (and often legalistic) meanings which are not relevant to either the culture of ancient Hellas or to the Hellenic milieu of the Corpus Hermeticum. The Tradition, the ancestral custom, of ancient Hellas - with the attendant mythology and legends - was recounted by Hesiod in Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι (Works and Days) and in Θεογονία (Theogony).

Qv. δικαιοσύνη μου, τὸ δίκαιον ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ in v. 18.

*vindicated.* In respect of ἐδικαιώθημεν (qv. δικαίω) what is not implied is 'made righteous' or 'made pure' - which are meanings derived from Christian exegesis, cf. ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοσύνην ποιησάτω ἔτι, Revelation 22:11 - but rather 'vindicated', justified, and in this case because Unfairness was *in absentia*, having fled with there thus being no need for any further deliberations.

*community.* κοινωνέω imputes the sense of 'sharing in common or in partnership', that is, a community of shared interests, which is the opposite of individual covetousness.

*With that departed.* Referring to the departure of Coveter, the personification here of covetousness.

*Actualis.* A borrowing from the Latin root to personify 'actuality', qv. the comment in v. 6 on τί οὖν ἀληθές ἐστιν ὧ Τρισμέγιστε.

*the noble has been returned.* However τὸ ἀγαθὸν is interpreted - whether as the conventional 'the good', or as I interpret depending on context, 'the noble', 'the highest nobility', 'the honourable' - the literal meaning of πεπλήρωται here - denoting "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is completed", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν has been fulfilled", "τὸ ἀγαθὸν is full" - is somewhat obscure, especially if one compares it to an apposite context such as John 3:29,

ὁ ἔχων τὴν νύμφην νυμφίος ἐστίν· ὁ δὲ φίλος τοῦ νυμφίου, ὁ ἐστηκώς

καὶ ἀκούων αὐτοῦ, χαρᾷ χαίρει διὰ τὴν φωνὴν τοῦ νυμφίου. αὕτη οὖν  
ἢ χαρὰ ἢ ἐμὴ πεπλήρωται

He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

In tractate IV:4, πληρώω is also apposite,

Καὶ ποῦ αὐτὸν ἰδρύσατο.  
Κρατῆρα μέγαν πληρώσας τούτου κατέπεμψε δοῦς κήρυκα καὶ  
ἐκέλευσεν αὐτῷ κηρύξαι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίαις τάδε...

Where, then, was it placed?

In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down with an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals...

Thus, I am inclined to consider that here the usage is metaphorical, suggestive of τὸ ἀγαθὸν having been completed (i) as in restored, returned to the person before the intervention of "the brutish Alastoras of Materies", who undermined, replaced, or who sought to replace τὸ ἀγαθὸν with such things as Grief, Unrestraint, Lascivity, and Putridity; or (ii) as in, as a gift from theos, completing - refining - the mortal by removing what was detrimental to τὸ ἀγαθὸν and thus to Palingenesis, with this completing - refining - returning them to the necessary state of being, as does the ἄνοδος described in the Poemandres tractate.

*phaos*. φάος. As with φῶς - qv. Poemandres, κ.τ.λ. - a transliteration since I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which word now implies many things which the Greek does not or may not; as for instance in the matter of over a thousand years of New Testament exegesis, especially in reference to the gospel of John. A transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what *phaos* may, or may not, mean, suggest or imply, especially as φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen. In addition, as noted in Poemandres 21 and perhaps relevant here,

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος

*phaos* and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being

*skotos*. σκότος. Given the following τιμωρία and what has preceded, I have personified σκότος here (as Hesiod personified Darkness as Erebus) since it is implausible for 'darkness', understood as absence of light, to punish or seek vengeance.

*they whirlingly rushed away.* I incline toward the view that in respect of ἐκπέτομαι what is meant is not a literal 'flying away' but a metaphor for 'rushing away' or hastily fleeing. Similarly in respect of ροίζω which suggests a whirling about in confusion as they flee; cf. Poemandres 11, δινῶν ροίζω, spinning them around.

Thus concludes what is apparently the initiation into the secret mystery of Palingenesis which began in v. 6 with "thus it is, my son. It ascends, as Fire does, and descends, as Earth does..."

## 10.

*the Dekad brought-into-being.* τῆς δεκάδος παραγινομένης. Given that δεκάς is a metaphysical term of the Way of Palingenesis as that Way is explained in this tractate, I have used the transliteration Dekad rather than 'decad'.

*geniture of apprehension.* νοερά γενεσις. Literally, a birthing of apprehension, of the ability to apprehend beyond what the alastoras signify in respect of our mortal nature. As in tractates VI and XI, geniture expresses the contextual meaning of γενεσις here: that which or those whom have their genesis (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. Here, this 'something else' is the Dekad which produces this particular birthing. In respect of geniture, XI:2 may provide some metaphysical context:

Ἄκουε, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ πᾶν. θεός, ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ χρόνος, ἡ γενεσις. ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γενεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡς περ οὐσία ἐστὶ [τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία,] ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἡ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἡ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ θάνατος

Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

*banishing those twelve.* The aforementioned alastoras, such as Grief and Lascivity.

*by this geniture we are of theos.* ἐθεώθημεν τῇ γενέσει. Cf. θεωθῆναι in Poemandres 26. As there, this does not mean or imply mortals become 'divinized' or 'deified' - "made into gods" - but rather it means θέωσις in the Hellenic, hermetic, sense of being mystically (re)united with theos but still being mortal, human, because there is and cannot be any partaking of, any participation in, the essence, the quidditas - οὐσία - of theos, a sense well

expressed centuries later by Maximus of Constantinople:

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται  
πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ'  
οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. Quæstiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra,  
XXII [Migne, Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all  
ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence

That is, Palingenesis means that mortals become *of* theos, not that they become theos or theoi. This may well explain the reading of the MSS, ἐθεωρήθημεν, amended by Nock (after Reitzenstein) to ἐθεώθημεν. For it is possible that the hermetic θέωσις implied, in practice, a contemplative type of life; a style of life hinted at in v. 2 - "noetic sapientia is in silence" - and in v. 7 when Hermes says to Thoth, "Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being." Cf. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 11.

*that generosity.* The definite article - *the* generosity - points to the meaning: not ἔλεος per se but rather the generosity of theos who gifts this geniture.

*they consist of such.* The MSS have συνιστάμενος - Nock, συνιστάμενον - and although some emendations have been proposed, including the addition of νοητῶν (ἐκ νοητῶν) and Reitzenstein suggesting a lacuna between γνωρίζει and ἐκ τούτων, what is referred to seems obvious: they consist of, are composed from, such things that are of - are derived from - theos.

## 11.

*quietude engendered by theos.* Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. With ἀκλινῆς understood metaphorically, cf. σοφία νοερά ἐν σιγῇ in v. 2.

*the seeing is not of...* In respect of φαντάζομαι, cf. XI:18, κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι.

*through the noetic actus of the cræft.* τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. In respect of 'cræft', cf. ἀνακαθαίρομενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν in v. 8. In regard to noetic, qv. the comment on σοφία νοερά in v. 2. In respect of actus, qv. the comment on ἐνέργεια in v. 6.

The metaphysical content of this statement, important both in respect of what immediately follows - which bears comparison with XI:18-19 (see below) - and in respect of understanding Palingenesis, has been somewhat lost in previous translations such as "with the mental energy that comes through the powers" and "with the energy the Mind gives me through the powers."

What is meant is that there is a specific type of apprehension which is vivifying, which does not depend on what is seen directly by the eyes, and which is a *cræft*, a capability, an ability, an influencing, arising from the generosity of theos and from that quietude engendered by theos. Thoth then goes on to describe what this apprehension involves: ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...

*I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water... Everywhere.* ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...πανταχοῦ. Regarding this, and the aforementioned type of apprehension, cf. tractate XI:18-19,

ἔνια δὲ τῶν λεγομένων ἰδίαν ἔννοιαν ἔχειν ὀφείλει· οἷον ὃ λέγω νόησον. πάντα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ θεῷ. οὐχ ὥς ἐν τόπῳ κείμενα (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τόπος καὶ σῶμά ἐστι, καὶ σῶμα ἀκίνητον, καὶ τὰ κείμενα κίνησιν οὐκ ἔχει)· κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι. νόησον τὸν περιέχοντα τὰ πάντα καὶ νόησον ὅτι τοῦ ἄσωμάτου οὐδὲν ἐστι περιοριστικόν, οὐδὲ ταχύτερον, οὐδὲ δυνατώτερον· αὐτὸ δὲ πάντων καὶ ἀπεριόριστον καὶ ταχύτατον καὶ δυνατώτατον.

καὶ οὕτω νόησον ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ, καὶ κέλευσόν σου τῇ ψυχῇ εἰς Ἰνδικὴν πορευθῆναι, καὶ ταχύτερόν σου τῆς κελεύσεως ἐκεῖ ἔσται. μετελθεῖν δὲ αὐτῇ κέλευσον ἐπὶ τὸν ὠκεανόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκεῖ πάλιν ταχέως ἔσται, οὐχ ὥς μεταβάσῃ ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον, ἀλλ' ὥς ἐκεῖ οὔσα. κέλευσον δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπτῆναι, καὶ οὐδὲ πτερῶν δεηθήσεται. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτῇ οὐδὲν ἐμπόδιον, οὐ τοῦ ἡλίου πῦρ, οὐχ ὁ αἰθήρ, οὐχ ἡ δίνη, οὐχὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων σώματα· πάντα δὲ διατεμοῦσα ἀναπτῆσεται μέχρι τοῦ ἐσχάτου σώματος. εἰ δὲ βουληθείης καὶ αὐτὸ ὅλον διαρρήξασθαι καὶ τὰ ἐκτός εἶ γέ τι ἐκτὸς τοῦ κόσμου θεάσασθαι, ἔξεστί σοι.

Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is

beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered system - then it is possible for you.

*What is that Way?* As in vv. 7 and 10, an alternative here for τρόπος would be Art.

## 12.

*dwelling.* σκήνος. The Greek word has been variously interpreted, as 'shelter', 'tent', and, in the New Testament, has been understood metaphorically to mean 'tabernacle' in reference to the body (2 Corinthians 5.1, 5.4). Here, what seems to be suggested, as Hermes later explains, is the deathful body as a temporary dwelling place for what is deathless.

*passed beyond.* διεξέρχομαι. Passed beyond as in the previous "I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water..." and as in the "go beyond yourself as those who sleepfully dream" of v. 4.

*zodiac.* ζωοφόρος. Literally, τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου implies "the life-bearing circle", referring to the personifications of the zodiacal constellations with the heavens understood as an abode of various divinities, qv. *Hymn to King Helios Dedicated to Sallust*, Πολὺν δὲ πρὸς οἷς ἔφην πλῆθος ἔστι περὶ τὸν οὐρανὸν θεῶν, οὓς κατενόησαν οἱ τὸν οὐρανὸν μὴ παρέργως μηδὲ ὥσπερ τὰ βοσκήματα θεωροῦντες. τοὺς τρεῖς γὰρ τετραχῆ τέμνων διὰ τῆς τοῦ ζωοφόρου κύκλου πρὸς ἕκαστον αὐτῶν κοινωνίας τοῦτον αὐθις τὸν ζωοφόρον εἰς δώδεκα θεῶν δυνάμεις διαιρεῖ καὶ μέντοι τούτων ἕκαστον εἰς τρεῖς, ὥστε ποιεῖν ἕξ ἐπὶ τοῖς τριάκοντα. (IV, 148c).

Cf. *De Mundo*, ὧν μέσος ὁ ζωιοφόρος καλούμενος κύκλος ἐγκάρσιος διὰ τῶν τροπικῶν διέζωσται. (Bekker, Aristoteles Opera Omnia, I, 392a)

*composed of beings, twelve in number.* Omitting the redundant ἀριθμῶν.

*same physis.* φύσεως μιᾶς. As in other tractates I have transliterated φύσις since in the Hermetica physis is a metaphysical principle or attribute whose meaning goes beyond, but can include, what the English terms 'nature' or 'character' - of a thing or person - denote, as the Poemandres tractate makes clear and where physis is, several times, personified, as for example in v. 14,

ἅμα δὲ τῇ βουλῇ ἐγένετο ἐνέργεια καὶ ὥικησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν ἣ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν

Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers,

they were intimately joined together.

*polymorphous*. παντόμορφος. Cf. XI:16, ἐπεὶ οὖν ὁ κόσμος παντόμορφος γέγονεν.

*difference*. διαζυγή. Literally, division, separation, cf. Euripides, Troades, 669 - ἄλλ' οὐδὲ πῶλος ἦτις ἂν διαζυγῇ τῆς συντραφείσης - and διάζευξις (disunion).

*effector of psyche*. ψυχογόνος. The 16th century English word *effector* (from the Latin word used by Cicero) is someone or some-thing who or which engenders or produces some-thing. As in other tractates, I have transliterated ψυχή as 'psyche' so as not to impose a particular meaning on the text. Whether what is meant is *anima mundi* - or some-thing else, such as the 'soul' of a human being, or a personification - is a question of contextual interpretation. However interpreted, it is an important, a primal, principle in this and other hermetic tractates, and might imply here the original, ancient Greek, sense of 'spark' (or breath) of life; of that 'thing' (or being) which (or who) animates beings making them 'alive'.

*with Life and Phaos a unity there where the arithmos of the henad is brought forth from the pneuma*. ζωὴ δὲ καὶ φῶς ἡνωμέναι εἰσὶν ἔνθα ὁ τῆς ἐνάδος ἀριθμὸς πέφυκε τοῦ πνεύματος. Since this expression is important to understanding the metaphysics described in the tractate it deserves some attention.

i) In respect of Life and Phaos, qv. v. 9.

ii) I have transliterated ἀριθμός here since the context suggests it implies more than the English word 'number' understood as a particular abstraction representing the quantity of 'things'; qv. Aristotle, ἄλλος δέ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶναι (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20). Given such a distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq, and given the occurrence of ἀριθμός with μονάς in tractate IV,

μονὰς οὕσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ...

Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any...

ἀριθμός is suggestive of a metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) principle or attribute - such as being an effluvium, or an emanation, of theos/monas/The One - whose outward (esoteric) appearance or representation is often assumed to be a particular 'numerical' quantity. As to whether or not what is suggested in the tractate regarding ἀριθμός is indicative of the metaphysics of Pythagoras, or represents a similar but different mystical



tradition, is an interesting question.

In terms of mystical tradition, there is a subtle difference between effluvia and emanations, with emanation often understood in the sense of some-thing proceeding from, or having, a source; as for example in theological use where the source is considered to be theos or some aspect of a divinity or God. Effluvium, however, has (so far as I am aware) no theological connotations and accurately describes a particular perceivization: a flowing of what-is, sans the assumption of a primal cause, and sans a division or a distinction between 'us' – we mortals – and some-thing else, be this some-thing else theos, God, a divinity, the numinous, or some assumed, ideated, cause, essence, origin, or form. Effluvia presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest in sentient beings such as ourselves, via for example a Way such as Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous.

iii) I have translated ἐνός as 'henad' - avoiding the prosaic translation 'unit' - given the metaphysical context, the aforementioned comparison with IV:10, the equivalence of ἐνός and μονός, and also the following, from tractate XII:15,

ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις συνθέτοις πᾶσι σώμασιν ἀριθμὸς ἐκάστου ἐστί.  
χωρὶς γὰρ ἀριθμοῦ σύστασιν ἢ σύνθεσιν ἢ διάλυσιν ἀδύνατον  
γενέσθαι· αἱ δὲ ἐνάδες τὸν ἀριθμὸν γεννῶσι καὶ αὖξουσιν καὶ πάλιν  
διαλυόμενον εἰς ἑαυτὰς δέχονται, καὶ ἡ ὕλη μία.

Yet in other combined corpora there is for each of them an arithmos, for without arithmos it is not possible for such a bringing together, such a melding, such a dissolution, to come-into-being. Henads beget and grow arithmos and, on its dissolution, receive it into themselves.

iv) As in other tractates, I have transliterated πνεῦμα (as pneuma) since, as with ψυχή - κ.τ.λ. - it is suggestive here of a particular metaphysical (and/or of an esoteric, hermetic) attribute, requiring contextual interpretation consistent with what is currently understood of Greco-Roman mysticism and metaphysics. The usual translation of 'spirit' can impose Christian, modern philosophical and other contemporary, meanings on the text.

### 13.

*All That Exists.* τὸ πᾶν. Literally, 'the all', but metaphysically implying 'all that exists', that is, the Universe, the Kosmos. Qv. the Cantio Arcana (Esoteric Song) of vv. 17-18, and also XII:22-23 where the term is synonymous with theos.

τοῦτο ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, τὸ πᾶν. ἐν δὲ τῷ παντὶ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ὃ μὴ ἔστιν ὁ θεός· ὅθεν οὔτε μέγεθος οὔτε τόπος οὔτε ποιότης οὔτε σχῆμα οὔτε χρόνος περὶ τὸν θεόν ἐστι· πᾶν γάρ ἐστι, τὸ δὲ πᾶν διὰ πάντων καὶ περὶ πάντα.

this is theos, All That Exists. For in all that exists there is no-thing that he is not.

Therefore, neither size, nor location nor disposition, nor appearance, nor age, are about theos. For he is all that exists; encompassing everything and within everything

When the context merits it, and to avoid awkward phraseology, I have sometimes translated τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, as at vv. 18 and 19.

*the perceivation.* τῷ νοί. Which perceivation was mentioned in v. 11: "the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air..."

In effect, this perceivation is of theos, and thus (i) of perceiving that 'all that exists' - including ourselves - are emanations of theos, or (ii) of perceiving that 'all that exists', including ourselves, are effluvia and thus presence, manifest - or can presence and manifest, via for example the Way of Palingenesis - the divine, the numinous, with theos thus understood as the artisan who crafted ourselves and every-thing else:

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός, οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ, ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ ἀεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα (Tractate IV:1)

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by theosis formed all that is.

Which metaphysical understanding is not only rather lost in conventional translations of ἐμαυτὸν ἐν τῷ νοί such as "I see myself in Mind," but which also introduce an abstraction, an ἰδέα, 'the mind', which detracts from an appreciation of emanations of theos and effluvia of the numinous.

*No more to present the body in three separations.* τὸ μηκέτι φαντάζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν. Or, less literally, "no more to present the body in three separate ways." And 'no more' because the perceivation is of 'all that exists' as either emanations of theos (the One) or presencings of the divine, the monadic numinous.

i) *to present.* That is, to present - to show - in a particular manner. In respect of φαντάζεσθαι, cf. Aeschylus, Agamemnon,

μηδ' ἐπιλεχθῆς  
Ἀγαμεμνονίαν εἶναί μ' ἄλοχον.  
φανταζόμενος δὲ γυναικὶ νεκροῦ 1500  
τοῦδ' ὁ παλαιὸς δριμὺς ἀλάστωρ  
Ἀτρέως χαλεποῦ θοινατῆρος  
τόνδ' ἀπέτεισεν

τέλεον νεαροῖς ἐπιθύσας.

But do not add to those words that it was me who was the mistress of Agamemnon  
Since the wife of this corpse presents herself here  
As that most ancient fierce Avenger.  
It is Atreus, he of that cruel feast,  
Who, in payment for that, has added to his young victims  
This adult one.

ii) *separations*. As noted in my commentary on tractate IV:1, what is not meant by διαστατός is 'dimension', given what the term 'dimension' now imputes scientifically and otherwise. What is expressed in IV:1 may also be relevant here:

τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ  
μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ  
πῦρ ἐστὶν οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε ἀήρ οὔτε πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire or Water or of Pneuma even though all such things are from that Being.

Thus, to translate τὸ μηκέτι φαντάζεσθαι εἰς τὸ σῶμα τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν as something like "no longer to picture the three-dimensional body" is to introduce two fairly recent, and unnecessary, abstractions: that of to picture/visualize - as if in some-thing denoted by the term 'mind' - and that of 'three-dimensions'. Whereas what the Greek expresses is relatively simple and suitable to the milieu of Greco-Roman mysticism: of not seeing, of not representing, the body in three particular ways. What these three separate ways are is open to interpretation, but the context suggests in terms of physicality, of psyche, and of pneuma.

*through this disclosure*. Although 'disclosure' seems apposite, λόγος could be translated here - as in the title - as 'discourse'.

Between τὸ τριχῇ διαστατόν and διὰ τὸν λόγον, Nock et al indicate a lacuna, although it is possible to make some sense of what is here rather obscure Greek. [An overview of some of the problems here - in the context of the meaning of the following διάβολος - is given by Anna Van den Kerchove, *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques*, Brill (Leiden), 2012, pp.100-4]

*written about for you alone*. Reading ὃν εἰς σὲ μόνον ὑπεμνηματισάμην with Reitzenstein et al, and taking ὑπεμνηματισάμην to refer to 'writing about' Palingenesis.

*rouner*. διάβολος. In regard to the Old English word *rouner* - denoting a person who whispers secrets or who spreads rumours in a secretive, disruptive,

manner - qv. the Prologue of the 14th century *Cloud Of Unknowing*,

Fleschely janglers, opyn preisers and blamers of hemself or of any other, tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales

Also, cf. 2 Timothy 3:3, ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀκρατεῖς (unloving, unforgiving, rouners, unrestrained) where mention is made of ἀκρατής, which in this tractate is personified as one of the Alastoras.

I take the following τοῦ παντός as referring to keeping the silence - the secrets - as mentioned in v. 22, rather than as referring to the preceding τὸ πᾶν.

*the many.* τοὺς πολλούς. It is possible to take this pejoratively and thus as referring to 'plebal outsiders', to 'the masses', the plebeians.

*but instead to whomsoever theos himself desires.* Reading ἀλλ' εἰς οὓς ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸς θέλει with Reitzenstein. The text is obscure to the point of being corrupt, with various emendations having been proposed, and thus my translation is somewhat conjectural.

#### 14.

*Speak quietly.* Qv. v. 8

*constituted of such cræfts.* Such cræfts as Palingenesis, and thus such abilities as a cræft confers.

*disrespected.* ἀσεβεῖσθαι. Qv. Lysias, Funeral Oration, 2.7,

Ἀθηναῖοι ἡγησάμενοι ἐκείνους μὲν εἴ τι ἡδίκουν, ἀποθανόντας δίκην ἔχειν τὴν μεγίστην τοὺς δὲ κάτω τὰ αὐτῶν οὐ κομίζεσθαι ἱερῶν δὲ μαινομένων τοὺς ἄνω θεοὺς ἀσεβεῖσθαι

the Athenians considered that if those ones had done harm then their death was the greater punishment, with those in the realms below not being attended to, and - with their consecrated places defiled - the gods above were being disrespected

Also, cf. Poemandres 23,

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἶμι

I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic

*the quiddity of geniture.* τῆς οὐσιωδοῦς γενέσεως. A metaphysical expression

which, in context, signifies that the essentiality, the realness, of the particular bringing-into-being that is Palingenesis - with its perception of effluvia (or of emanations of theos) and of the mortal being 'all that exists' - is far removed from the physis that ordinary perception associates with the physical body.

*engendered of theos.* θεὸς πέφυκας. That is, reborn through Palingenesis because of theos. The following καὶ τοῦ ἐνὸς παῖς provides the necessary context. In respect of Palingenesis signifying becoming *of* theos (as a child is *of* the parent) and not becoming theos or theoi, qv. the comment on v. 6, "by this geniture we are of theos." Cf. φύσει μὲν πέφυκας θεός (Josephus Hymnographicus, *Feast of Saint Basilissa*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 105, 1120) and δόξης γέμων θεός πέφυκας (Joannes Geometra, *Carmina Varia*, Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, 106, 997)

## 15.

*song.* ὕμνος. Not a 'hymn' in the Christian sense (which the word hymn now so often imputes) but rather celebrating the numinous, and theos, in song, verse (ode), and chant.

*you said you heard from those influences when you reached the Ogdoad.* The Ogdoad - ὀγδοος, the eighth - relates to Poemandres 26, τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν, the ogdoadic physis which is beyond the seven spheres, the reaching of which is celebrated in song, ὕμνεῖ σὺν τοῖς οὕσι τὸν πατέρα, which signifies the end of the mortal anados (ἄνοδος) and where the mortal hears 'the influences' - those of The Cræft - who or which are beyond the ogdoad celebrating theos in melodious song, τινων δυνάμεων ὑπὲρ τὴν ὀγδοατικὴν φύσιν φωνῇ τινι ἡδεῖαι ὕμνουσῶν τὸν θεόν.

There are several ways of interpreting the text here and what follows. If one accepts the emendation σου (Nock, after Reitzenstein) then Thoth is asking to hear the song Hermes heard when he reached the Ogdoad, while if one reads, with the MSS, μου, then Thoth is asking for the song Hermes said Thoth would hear when Thoth himself reaches the Ogdoad. In addition, τῶν δυνάμεων in association with either σου ἀκοῦσαι or μου ἀκοῦσαι is awkward, implying "heard from The Cræft" - or, in exoteric terms, "from the (those) Powers/Forces /Influences/" - when whomsoever reaches the Ogdoad, and which inclines one to ask, whose or what influences/powers? Those mentioned, for example, in vv. 8-9, such as Delightfulness, Self-Restraint, and Perseverance? If so, are these influences, collectively, The Cræft itself personified and who thus, through the generosity of theos, enable Palingenesis?

On balance, given the reference to Poemandres 26, I am inclined to accept the emendation σου and take 'the influences' as referring to those of The Cræft, some of whom are personified in vv. 8-9, and which 'influences' are those who in Poemandres 26 are "celebrating theos in melodious song."

*divined about the Ogdoad.* Taking καθὼς Ὀγδοάδα ὁ Ποιμάνδρης ἐθέσπισε with τέκνον, not with the preceding ἀκοῦσαι τῶν δυνάμεων.

*Poemandres, the perceivization of authority.* Qv. Poemandres 2, εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς. As there, the title implies "What (knowledge) I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Poemandres, the authentic perceivization."

*and entrusting me to presence the beautiful.* καὶ ἐπέτρεψέ μοι ἐκεῖνος ποιεῖν τὰ καλά. While an alternative translation is "and entrusting me to presence the noble," it does not immediately connect to what follows: of beautifully presencing such beautiful things as the esoteric song (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη, cantio arcana) which Hermes proceeds to teach to Thoth.

#### 16.

*except to you at your completion.* εἰ μὴ σοὶ ἐπὶ τέλει τοῦ παντός. More literally, "except to you at the ending of the whole." That is, at the ending of the initiation into the secret of Palingenesis.

*respectfully.* That is, reverentially. The sense of προσκυνέω here does not necessarily imply a 'kneeling down' or some sort of what the Greeks (and the Romans) would undoubtedly have described as a 'barbarian adoration' or prostration as if in worship of Helios or of some-thing. It also does not necessarily imply a type of body-bent bowing, a stooping, toward a particular person (cf. Herodotus, I:119.1, ἄρπαγος μὲν ὥς ἤκουσε ταῦτα, προσκυνήσας καὶ μεγάλα ποιησάμενος ὅτι τε ἡ ἀμαρτὰς οἱ ἐς δέον ἐγγόνεε καὶ ὅτι ἐπὶ τύχησι χρηστῆσι ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἐκέκλητο, ἦε ἐς τὰ οἰκία).

What such respect, in this particular case, involved is unknown although the tractate - with its invocations of Self-Restraint, the imperturbable, the unwaveringly noble, of a contemplative silence, and its declamation of "go within" - is suggestive of a simple, unadorned, silent, respect for the numinous and the divine, as might perhaps be manifest in a slight bowing of the head. Cf. John 4:20 where the type of reverence is also unknown,

οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν· καὶ ὑμεῖς λέγετε ὅτι ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐστὶν ὁ τόπος ὅπου προσκυνεῖν δεῖ.

Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem.

#### 17.

*Logos Δ.* The MSS at this point have the heading ὑμνωδία κρύπτη, λόγος Δ. While ὑμνωδία κρύπτη is understandable - Esoteric Song, Cantio Arcana, Secret Chant - the meaning of λόγος Δ is conjectural, with suggestions including The Fourth Song, The Fourth Formula, and the Fourth Discourse, with the obvious implication that there are, or were, four such hermetic songs, formulae, or discourses, with various suggestions as to those other three, such as Poemandres 31, tractate V:10, and Asclepius 41, all of which are relatively short.

*every Physis of Kosmos.* Among the presencings of the Kosmos described here by their physis are Earth, Trees, the Heavens, Air, and Water.

In respect of Kosmos and physis, qv. tractate XII:14,

ἀνάγκη δὲ καὶ ἡ πρόνοια καὶ ἡ φύσις ὄργανά ἐστι τοῦ κόσμου

Necessitas, foreseeing, and physis, are implements of Kosmos

*Gaia.* γῆ. Earth as elemental principle, hence the personification here since Earth is being directly, personally, invoked.

*open.* ἀνοίγνυμι. Cf. Papyri Graecae Magicae, XXXVI. 312ff. The term was often used in both mystic odes and in classical magicae incantations. The Latin *aperio* well expresses the sense, as in "aperire librum et septem signacula eius," (Jerome, Revelation V:5) and "et cum aperuisset sigillum secundum." (Jerome, Revelation VI:3)

*μοχλός.* Here, not a literal 'bolt' or 'lock' but what prevents (access to) or is a defence against something.

*Abyss.* ἀβύσσου. This is the emendation of Reitzenstein for the various readings of the MSS. Nock has ὄμβρου which does not make sense here, for why "open what prevents" rain? In respect of ἄβυσσος, qv. tractate III:1.

*incurvate.* This unusual English term is appropriate here to poetically suggest the sense of the Greek - σείω - which is to bend from side to side as if shaken by an earthquake, by a trembling of the Earth.

*Master Artisan.* κτίσεως κύριον. 'Founding Lord', or less poetically, Lord of Creation. Theos as creator-artisan is mentioned in Poemandres 9, with the term there, and in tractate IV:1, being δημιουργόν. Qv. also δύναμις δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἰών (the craft of theos: Aion) in tractate XI:3.

*clan.* κύκλος. Here signifying a particular group, or a particular assembly, of people as in the English expression "the inner circle." Hence, "the clan of

theos".

*Sweet water.* γλυκὺ ὕδωρ. The sweetness of water suitable to drink. Cf. John 4:10, ὕδωρ ζῶν, the 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς.

*bring light to.* In respect of φαίνω as 'bringing light', cf. Plato, Timaeus, 39b,

φῶς ὁ θεὸς ἀνῆψεν ἐν τῇ πρὸς γῆν δευτέρᾳ τῶν περιόδων, ὃ δὲ νῦν  
κεκλήκαμεν ἥλιον, ἵνα ὅτι μάλιστα εἰς ἅπαντα φαίνοι τὸν οὐρανὸν

theos ignited a light in that second circle from Earth, named now as Helios, so that it could bring light to all of the heavens

*fond celebration.* Regarding εὐλογία in a neutral way which does not impute the Christian sense of "praise the Lord", qv. Poemandres 22,

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς  
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,  
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται  
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες  
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

*my Arts.* As at Poemandres 31 - which is also a traditional doxology (δοξολογία) to theos - the sense of δυνάμεων is not 'powers', forces (or something similar and equally at variance with such a laudation) but 'arts'; that is, particular abilities, qualities, and skills. Here, these abilities and skills - the craft - relate to esoteric song; to be able to be an effective laudator in respect of theos and "every Physis of Kosmos."

## 18.

*numinous.* ἅγιος. As in the Poemandres tractate and other tractates.

*knowledge.* As at Poemandres 26, γνῶσις here could be transliterated as gnosis although I incline toward the view that such a transliteration might - given what the term gnosis now imputes, as for example in being a distinct 'spiritual way' - lead to incorrectly imposing modern meanings on the text.

*numinal understanding.* φωτίζω here implies an understanding given by a divinity, as for example in spiritual enlightenment, something that is not conveyed if a single word such as 'enlightened' is used as a translation. In order to express something of the Greek, I had used the term 'numinal understanding' with numinal implying 'divine' as at tractate III:1,



Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

*phaos*. As at Poemandres 4ff - and in other tractates - a transliteration of φῶς - using the the Homeric φάος, given that it (like physis) is a fundamental principle of Hermetic weltanschauungen and one which the overused English word 'light', with all its modern and Christian interpretations, does not satisfactorily express.

*mastery*. Implying mastery over one's self, cf. Chaucer, The Physician's Tale: "Bacus hadde of hir mouth right no maistrie." (v. 58)

*respectful of custom*. δίκαιος. Not 'righteous', which imposes abstract theological meanings (mostly derived from the Old and New Testaments) on the text, but rather 'respectful of custom', of dutifully doing one's duty (that is, being honourable) toward both the gods and other mortals.

*Honesty*. ἀλήθεια. Given that those who are urged to sing are personifications, this is not some abstract, disputable, 'truth' but as often elsewhere in classical literature, a revealing, a dis-covering, of what is real as opposed to what is apparent or outer appearance. In personal terms, being honest and truthful.

*Through me, may Kosmos accept...* δι' ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ. I take this with the following λογικὴν θυσίαν, and τὸ πᾶν as vocative, and poetically combine the unnecessary λόγῳ with λογικὴν. As punctuated by Nock et al it would with λογικὴν θυσίαν literally be something such as "through me accept in speech All That Exists/the Kosmos, an offering spoken," which - in the context of the song and of theos being τὸ πᾶν, All That Exists/the Kosmos - is distinctly odd.

Here, as in v. 19, translating τὸ πᾶν as Kosmos, rather than 'All That Exists' to elucidate the meaning and avoid awkward phraseology.

*respectful wordful offerings*. Qv. Poemandres 31. The difficult to translate Greek term λογικὴν θυσίαν implies an offering, and one which is both respectful and conveyed by means of words but which words are of themselves insufficient, inadequate, with the term 'wordful' suggesting such insufficiency as well as doubling for λόγῳ in the previous line.

## 19.

I take λογικὴν θυσίαν (respectful wordful offerings) as the end of the named, the metaphysical, 'esoteric song' (ὕμνωδία κρύπτη) with what follows - lines 214-235, that is, until the interjection by Thoth - a personal evocation, a chant, to theos - τὸ πᾶν - for acceptance of the offering (the singing of the esoteric

song) followed by a personal request to remain enlightened, followed by an epiphonema which includes sentiments of personal gratitude.

*Life, recure.* σῶζε ζωή. Recure - from the classical Latin recuro - is an interesting, if neglected, English word and is apposite here implying as it does restore (to health), heal, and preserve. As mentioned in Poemandres 17 regarding Life and Phaos,

ὁ δὲ Ἄνθρωπος ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ἐγένετο εἰς ψυχὴν καὶ νοῦν, ἐκ μὲν ζωῆς ψυχὴν, ἐκ δὲ φωτὸς νοῦν

Of Life and Phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceiversion; from Life - psyche; from Phaos - perceiversion

*Theos, spiritus.* πνεῦμα θεέ. In respect of πνεῦμα Nock considered it doubtful and noted the suggestion of Keil, πνευμάτιζε, although πνεῦμα θεέ - theos, pneuma (spiritus) - does seem appropriate: theos, 'a breath', a breathing, Pneuma; which breathing imbues beings with life and spirit, with pneuma.

*Breath-Giver, Artisan.* πνευματοφόρε δημιουργέ. Literally, "Pneuma-Bearing, Artisan." The Master Craftsman whose craft is to make - to construct, to create - living beings.

20.

*Because of your desire.* Qv. v. 4, θελήματι θεοῦ.

21.

I follow Festugiere and take τῷ σῷ τὴν εὐλογίαν ταύτην λεγομένην as belonging to Thoth, not Hermes.

*a more numinal perceiversion.* Regarding ἐπιφωτιζω, qv. v. 16, γνῶσις ἁγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ and the comment on 'numinal understanding'. As there, what is meant is not some ordinary type of 'illumination' but rather a divinely-inspired or a divinely-given understanding. Here, this understanding has enhanced the perceiversion Thoth has acquired.

*from my heart.* As at v. 4, φρήν as a metaphor for the heart. Which explains the response of Hermes: μὴ ἀσκόπως.

*essentiator.* Qv. v. 4.

*kyrios.* A transliteration of the Greek, appropriate here given what terms such as 'Lord' and 'Master' now so often denote, and given Poemandres 6,

Οὕτω γινώθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς  
πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν  
ἡ ζωή

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although  
perceivation is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other,  
because their union is Life.

## 22.

*invokation.* εὐχομαι. Not 'pray' - which has too many Christian and other  
non-Hellenic religious connotations - but invokation, as in appeal to a deity, to  
call upon, to offer a laudation or an offering. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 933,  
ἠύξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ὧδ' ἔρδειν τάδε, did you invoke the gods because you  
feared doing such things?

*the unrottable produce.* τὰ ἀθάνατα γενήματα. Literally, "the  
deathless/immortal produce". Taking ἀθάνατος metaphorically contrasts well  
with the preceding 'bearing good fruit'.

*the tradition.* In respect of παράδοσις, cf. παραδιδόναι μοι in v. 1. As there, the  
suggestion is of a disclosing of some ancestral teaching or wisdom; the  
disclosing by a teacher or master to a pupil.

*rouners.* For 'rouner' in respect of διάβολος, qv. v. 13, εἰς δὲ ὑπεμνηματι σάμην  
ἵνα μὴ ὦμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τοὺς πολλούς.

*noesis.* A technical, mystical, term, qv. the comment on 'noetic sapientia' in v. 2.

---



## Bibliography

- ° B. Copenhaver. *Hermetica*. Cambridge University Press. 1992
- ° A-J. Festugiere. *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*. Les Belles Lettres, Paris, 1944-1954.
- ° Anna Van den Kerchove. *La voie d'Hermès: Pratiques rituelles et traités hermétiques*. Brill, Leiden, 2012.
- ° GRS Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906
- ° A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Paris, 1972
- ° Gustav Parthey, *Hermes Trismegisti Poemander*. Berlin, 1854.
- ° W. Scott and A. S. Ferguson: *Hermetica: The Ancient Greek and Latin Writings*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924-1936
- ° Dieterich Tiedemann, *Hermes Trismegisti Poemander*. Berlin, 1781.
- ° Turnebus. *Ερμού του Τρισεγίστου Ποιμάνδρης Ασκληπιού Όροι προς Άμμονα Βασιλέα*. Paris 1554
- ° van den Broek. *From Poimandres to Jacob Bohme*. Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica. 2000
- ° R.A. Reitzenstein. *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927.
- ° R. A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres: Studien zur griechisch-ägyptischen und frühchristlichen Literatur*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1904
- ° R. A. Reitzenstein & H. H. Schaeder. *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland*, (Studien der Bibliothek Warburg), Teubner, Leipzig, 1926

---

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2017  
(Second Edition)

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt

---

## Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum

Three of the many Greek terms of interest in respect of understanding the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts that comprise the Corpus Hermeticum are ἀγαθός and νοῦς and θεός, with conventional translations of these terms as 'good' and 'Mind' and 'god' (or God) imparting the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity interspersed with definitive philosophical statements about 'Mind', as if a "transcendent intelligence, rationality," or a "Mental or psychic faculty" or both, or something similar, is meant or implied.

Thus the beginning of tractate VI - τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὃ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ - and dealing as it does with both ἀγαθός and θεός, has been translated, by Mead, as "Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally," [1] and by Copenhaver as "The good, Asclepius, is in nothing except in god alone, or rather god himself is always the good." [2]

In respect of νοῦς, a typical example is from Poemandres 12 - ὁ δὲ πάντων πατήρ ὁ Νοῦς, ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον αὐτῷ ἴσον, οὗ ἡράσθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου· περικαλλὴς γάρ, τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἔχων· ὄντως γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡράσθη τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς, παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. The beginning of this is translated by Mead as "But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child for he was beautiful beyond compare," and by Copenhaver as "Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father's image."

Similarly, in respect of Poemandres 22 - παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἱλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὕμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ - which is translated by Mead as "I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. [To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love," and by Copenhaver as "I myself, the mind, am present to the blessed and good and pure and merciful - to the reverent - and my presence becomes a help; they quickly recognize everything, and they propitiate the father lovingly and give thanks, praising and singing hymns affectionately and in the order appropriate to him."

As explained in various places in my commentary on tractates I, III, IV, VIII, and XI, and in two appendices [3], I incline toward the view that - given what such English terms as 'the good', Mind, and god now impute, often as a result of two thousand years of Christianity and post-Renaissance, and modern, philosophy - such translations tend to impose particular and modern interpretations on the texts and thus do not present to the reader the ancient ethos that forms the basis of the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum.

To avoid such impositions, and in an endeavour to express at least something of that ancient (and in my view non-Christian) ethos, I have - for reasons explained in the relevant sections of my commentary - transliterated θεός as theos [4], νοῦς as perceiveration, or according to context, perceiverance; and ἀγαθός as, according to context, nobility, noble, or honourable [5]. Which is why my reading of the Greek of the three examples above provides the reader with a somewhat different impression of the texts:

° Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. [6]

° Perceiveration, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved.

° I, perceiveration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

But, as I noted in respect of ἀγαθός in the *On Ethos And Interpretation* appendix, whether these particular insights of mine are valid, others will have to decide. But they - and my translations of the tractates in general - certainly, at least in my fallible opinion, convey an impression about ancient Hermeticism which is rather different from that conveyed by other translations.

David Myatt  
March 2017

Extract from a letter in reply to a correspondent who, in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, enquired about my translation of terms such as ἀγαθός and νοῦς. I have, for publication here, added a footnote which references my translations of and commentaries on five tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

## Notes

[1] G.R.S Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906.

[2] B. Copenhaver. *Hermetica*. Cambridge University Press. 1992

[3] My translation of and commentary on tractates I, III, IV, and XI - and the two appendices - is available in pdf format at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/corpus-hermeticum-i-iii-iv-xi/>

My translation of and commentary on tractate VIII is available in pdf format at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/corpus-hermeticum-viii/>

[4] To be pedantic, when θεός is mentioned in the texts it often literally refers to 'the' theos so that at the beginning of tractate VI, for example, the reference is to 'the theos' rather than to 'god'.

[5] In respect of 'the good' - τὸ ἀγαθόν - as 'honourable', qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4, "summum bonum est quod honestum est. Et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt."

[6] The suggestion seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin, the archetype, of what is noble, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presented and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

As I noted in my commentary - qv. especially the mention of Maximus of Constantinople in respect of Poemandres 31 - I have transliterated εἰκὼν.

---

Related:

[On Translating Ancient Greek](#)  
(pdf)

[Greek Terms in The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos](#)

---

This essay is covered by the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) license and can be copied and distributed under the terms of that license.

---





scribal corruption of the name Thoth.

*Esoteric Discourse.* λόγος απόκρυφος. While 'esoteric' is an apt translation in regard to απόκρυφος, 'discourse' is not entirely satisfactory in respect of λόγος since it could be here interpreted to mean 'disclosure' or 'explanation'. However, given what follows in section 1 – πυθομένου τὸν τῆς παλιγγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν...παραδιδόναι μοι – 'discourse' does seem appropriate.

*Palingenesis.* Rather than ascribe a particular meaning to παλιγγενεσία – such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' – I have chosen the English word palingenesis (from the Latin palingenesia) with that word explained by what follows in this particular discourse, qv. sections 12 and 13.

*Requirement.* The sense of ἐπαγγελία here, given what is discussed in this tractate, is 'requirement' rather than the strident 'command' or what is implied by the rather vague word 'promise'.

### The First Line

The first part of the first line of XIII is: Ἐν τοῖς Γενικοῖς, ὦ πάτερ, αἰνιγματωδῶς καὶ οὐ τηλαυγῶς ἔφρασας περὶ θειότητος διαλεγόμενος.

Conventionally: "In the General Sermons, father, thou didst speak in riddles most unclear, conversing on Divinity."

My translation is:

When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure.

Which translation, as with title, requires some explanation:

*Father.* The Greek ὦ πάτερ – literally 'my father' – is a polite form of address, akin to the English 'sir'. Similarly, ὦ τέκνον – 'my son' – is a polite reply. Given the esoteric nature of the text, a possible interpretation here of ὦ πάτερ would be 'Master', and of ὦ τέκνον 'my pupil'.

*in the Exoterica.* Ἐν τοῖς γενικοῖς. Since the term γενικῶν λόγων occurs in tractate X it is reasonable to assume that γενικός here refers to the same thing although the meaning of the term is moot given that no details are provided in this tractate nor in tractate X, nor in Stobaeus – *Excerpts*, III, 1 and VI, 1 – where the term also occurs. While most translators have assumed that it refers to 'generic' things or 'generalities' and thus (by adding λόγοι) have opted for an expression such as 'General Sermons', and given that a transliteration – such as genikois or genikoi – is awkward, I have in respect of the γενικοὶ opted for exoterica (from the Latin via the Greek τὰ ἐξωτερικά) with the meaning of "exoteric treatises designed for or suitable to the generality of disciples or students," with the plausible suggestion thus being that there are exoteric Hermetic treatises and esoteric Hermetic treatises, with Reitzenstein describing these other treatises as διεξοδικοί λόγοι (R.A. Reitzenstein. *Poimandres*. Teubner, Leipzig. 1904. p.118) a distinction he also mentioned in his later work *Die Hellenistischen Mysterien Religionen*. One such esoteric treatise is tractate XIII.

### The Esoteric Song

This much translated part of XIII has, in my opinion, been somewhat misunderstood given, for example, that θεὸς has invariably been translated by 'God' – implying as that word now so often does the God of Christianity – and φῶς (as in translations of the New Testament) translated by 'light', with ἀλήθεια as some kind of abstract 'truth', and with ὕμνος as 'hymn' suggestive as that English word now so often is of the hymns of Christian worship.

Conventionally, the first few verses are translated along the following lines:

"Let every nature of the World receive the utterance of my hymn!  
Open thou Earth! Let every bolt of the Abyss be drawn for me. Stir not, ye Trees!  
I am about to hymn creation's Lord, both All and One.  
Ye Heavens open, and ye Winds stay still; and let God's deathless Sphere receive my word."

My translation [1] is as follows:

Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.  
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;  
Trees: do not incurvate;  
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,  
For All That Exists, and for The One.  
Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.  
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.

Which, for me at least, evokes – as tractate XIII does in its entirety – something redolent of paganism rather than of Christianity.

David Myatt  
2017

[1] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

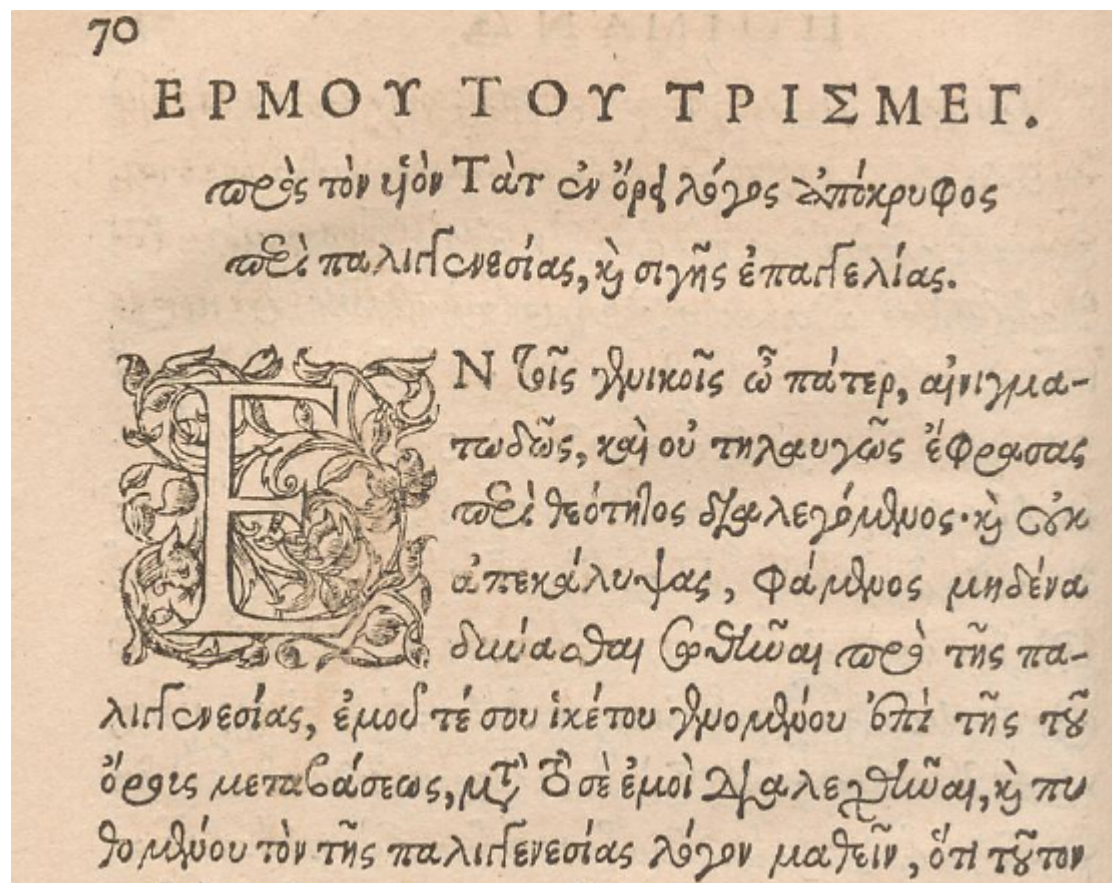
---

Image credit:

The beginning of tractate XIII from the book *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pœmandres*, published in Paris in 1554

---





### A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII

#### Context

In many ways the last line of section 22 of tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum - νοερῶς ἔγνωσ σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον - expresses an important aspect of the Hellenistic hermetic tradition: that "through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father" which relates to section 2 of the tractate where the expression σοφία νοερὰ occurs.

However, this aspect has been somewhat neglected since νοερός has usually been and still is translated by English words which now imply and have implied for well over a century philosophical and latterly psychological denotata, abstractions, categories, which I consider are not relevant to the Hellenistic milieu.

In his 1882 translation Chambers used the word 'mind', "Mentally thou hast known thyself and The Father that is ours," [1] while the 1992 translation by Copenhaver was "You know yourself and our father intellectually." [2]

A neglected aspect, because and for instance 'intellectually' now implies 'cleverly', 'by means of certain types of abstractive reasoning or concepts or ideas' with an 'intellectual' perceived as a certain type of person.

My own translation, in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, [3] is "Through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father," using noesis, a transliteration, to suggest a hermetic, a metaphysical, principle which requires contextual interpretation since as I noted in my commentary, the terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός are mentioned by Proclus, [4] with νοῦς there and in the Corpus Hermeticum not suggestive of the denotata 'mind', which now has also acquired philosophical and latterly psychological meanings but of 'perceivation' as in the Poemandres tractate:

φημὶ ἐγώ, Σὺ γὰρ τίς εἶ; – Ἐγὼ μὲν, φησὶν, εἰμὶ ὁ Ποιμάνδρης, ὁ τῆς αὐθεντίας νοῦς· οἶδα δὲ βούλει, καὶ σύνειμί σοι πανταχοῦ.

φημὶ ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν· πῶς, ἔφην, ἀκοῦσαι βούλομαι. – φησὶν ἐμοὶ πάλιν, Ἔχε νῶν σῶν ὅσα θέλεις μαθεῖν, κἀγὼ σε διδάξω.

I am Poemandres, the perceivation of authority, knowing your desires and eachwhere with you.

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos. That is what I want to hear. [5]

In summation, noesis is a personal method, a praxis, by which particular knowledge, a particular understanding, can be obtained and in the context of tractate XIII this is of Palingenesis, παλιγγενεσία, acquired "in silence" and which emanation, of theos, "is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires," οὐ διδάσκεται, ἀλλ' ὅταν θέλῃ, ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ ἀναμνησκέται. [v.2]

As the student describes in v.11:

With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the cræft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere. [6]

Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὧ πάτερ, φαντάζομαι, οὐχ ὁράσει ὀφθαλμῶν ἀλλὰ τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι· ἐν ζώοις εἰμί, ἐν φυτοῖς· ἐν γαστρὶ, πρὸ γαστροῦ, μετὰ γαστέρα, πανταχοῦ.

In regard to the word Cræft in the translation, this older spelling in an esoteric context implies (as often in this tractate) a particular *Arte*, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned or received in the traditional manner from a master of the *Arte* or *Arts* in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an *Arte* that "is not taught; rather, it is presented by and when the theos desires". The word cræft also has the advantage of implying the plural, such as in the expression the Cræft(s) of theos.

As for Palingenesis, from the Latin palingenesia, English terms such as 'rebirth' or 'regeneration' do not describe what is meant in terms of the context of the *Corpus Hermeticum* which is that mortals become *of* theos, not that they become theos or theoi. This may well explain the reading of the MSS in v.10, ἐθεωρήθημεν, amended by Nock (after Reitzenstein) to ἐθεώθημεν. For it is possible that the hermetic θέωσις implied, in practice, a contemplative type of life; a style of life hinted at in v. 2 - "noetic sapientia is in silence" - and in v. 7 when Hermes says to Thoth, "Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being." Cf. Ἀκλινῆς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ in v. 11.

Hence Palingenesis is not a Buddhist-type of rebirth or of being reborn to eternally live in some place such as Heaven, but an awareness that we are "in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air [...] in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere" and thus that our perception of ourselves as an individual different and distinct from others, human and otherwise, is but an illusion, preventing us understanding theos, our relation to theos, and thus our place in the Cosos.

Which explains v.7, of the need to "refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies,"

"My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity. In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of." [7]

Μία αὕτη, ὧ τέκνον, τιμωρία ἢ ἄγνοια· δευτέρα λύπη· τρίτη ἀκρασία· τετάρτη ἐπιθυμία· πέμπτη ἀδικία· ἕκτη πλεονεξία· ἑβδόμη ἀπάτη· ὀγδόη φθόνος· ἐνάτη δόλος· δεκάτη ὀργή· ἐνδεκάτη προπέτεια· δωδεκάτη κακία· εἰσὶ δὲ αὗται τὸν ἀριθμὸν δώδεκα· ὑπὸ δὲ ταύτας πλείονες ἄλλαι, ὧ τέκνον, διὰ τοῦ δεσμοτηρίου τοῦ σώματος αἰσθητικῶς πάσχειν ἀναγκάζουσι τὸν ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρωπον· ἀφίστανται δὲ αὗται, οὐκ ἀθρώως, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐλεηθέντος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος.

This is similar to the ἄνοδος, the hermetic quest, of the *Peomandres* tractate, v.25, of the journey the mortal through the seven spheres:

καὶ οὕτως ὁρμᾷ λοιπὸν ἄνω διὰ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρᾳ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τὴν ἐπιθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τετάρτῃ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴν προφανίαν ἀπλεονέκτητον, καὶ τῇ πέμπτῃ τὸ θράσος τὸ ἀνόσιον καὶ τῆς τόλμης τὴν προπέτειαν, καὶ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰς ἀφορμὰς τὰς κακὰς τοῦ πλοῦτου ἀνενεργήτους, καὶ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ζώνῃ τὸ ἐνεδρεῦον ψεῦδος.

"Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait." [7]

## Theos, The Monas, Divinity, The One, And Patriarchy

The expression "through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father" - νοερώς ἔγνωσ σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον - is, in my view comparable to the phrase "quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora" of Marsilio Ficini from 1489 CE [8] which itself is a restatement of an expression from the Arabic text *Lawh al-Zumurrud* in *Sirr al-khalīqa* dating from several centuries earlier which I translated as "for the higher is as the lower with the lower as the higher." [9]

Both express important aspects of the esoteric nature of ancient hermeticism whose essence is perhaps expressed by

this section from Lawh al-Zumurrud:

The signs were from The One  
As all beings are from The One  
Through one design:  
The father, the Sun,  
The mother, the Moon,  
The Pnuema, the womb  
The Earth, the nourishment. [9]

As described in tractate XI, v.11:

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one. But who is it? Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings? Theos therefore is One...

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς, φανερώτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἂν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίνι γὰρ ἄλλωι ἂν καὶ πρέποι ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν εἰ μὴ μόνωι τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός.

The One is almost certainly the μονάς, Monas, of tractate IV for in vv.10-11 of that tractate it is stated:

This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different  
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.  
Since the Monas is the origin and foundation of everything  
It is within everything as origin and foundation  
For if there is no origin there is nothing  
And the origin is not from anything but itself  
Since it is the origin of everything else,  
Just as the Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos [10]  
Without itself being enfolded by any,  
Begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any

Everything that is begotten is unfinished, partible,  
Liable to decline, resurgence  
Which do not befall what is complete  
For what is resurgent is resurgence from Monas  
But what is brought low is so by its own malady  
Because unable to hold Monas.

This, then, Thoth, is the eikon of the theos  
Insofar as it can be drawn:  
If you - clearly, carefully - and with the eyes of your heart apprehend it  
Then I assure you, my son, that you shall find the path to what is above:  
In truth, the eikon will guide you  
Since the seeing of it is uniquely your own,  
For those who attain such a beholding are attentively held, pulled up,  
Just as it is said lodestone does with iron.

αὕτη διαφορὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίωι ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον. ἡ γὰρ μονάς, οὕσα πάντων ἀρχὴ καὶ ρίζα, ἐν πᾶσιν ἔστιν ὡς ἂν ρίζα καὶ ἀρχή. ἄνευ δὲ ἀρχῆς οὐδὲν, ἀρχὴ δὲ ἐξ οὐδενὸς ἀλλ' ἐξ αὐτῆς, εἴ γε ἀρχὴ ἔστι τῶν ἐτέρων. μονάς οὕσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

πᾶν δὲ τὸ γεννώμενον ἀτελὲς καὶ διαιρετόν, καὶ αὐξητὸν καὶ μειωτόν, τῷ δὲ τελείωι οὐδὲν τούτων γίνεται. καὶ τὸ μὲν αὐξητὸν αὐξάνεται ἀπὸ τῆς μονάδος, ἀλίσκεται δὲ ὑπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἀσθενείας, μηκέτι δυνάμενον τὴν μονάδα χωρῆσαι. αὕτη οὖν, ὦ Τάτ. κατὰ τὸ δυνατόν σοι ὑπογέγραπται τοῦ θεοῦ εἰκῶν· ἣν ἀκριβῶς εἰ θεάσῃ καὶ νοήσῃς τοῖς τῆς καρδίας ὀφθαλμοῖς, πιστεύσόν μοι, τέκνον, εὐρήσεις τὴν πρὸς τὰ ἄνω ὁδόν. μᾶλλον δὲ αὐτὴ σε ἡ εἰκὼν ὀδηγήσει. ἔχει γάρ τι ἴδιον ἢ θέα· τοὺς φθάσαντας θεάσασθαι κατέχει καὶ ἀνέλκει, καθάπερ φασὶν ἡ μαγνήτις λίθος τὸν σίδηρον.

Similarly, the Poemandres tractate states that "phaos and Life formed the father of all beings," [11] with the logical conclusion that the appellations Monas, The One, The Father, Theos, (θεὸς) and The Theos (ὁ θεὸς) are equivalent.

As for the Father, an appellation familiar from Christianity, the Poemandres tractate, v.9, is quite explicit:

Theos, the perceiviation, male-and-female [ἄρρενόθηλυσ] being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceiviation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pnuema - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἄρρενόθηλυσ ὢν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὢν, ἐδημιούργησε διοικητάς τινας ἑπτά, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν



αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται.

This male-and-female theos therefore does not seem to be the patriarchal male God of the Old and New Testaments which has led to disputations regarding the meaning of ἀρρενόθηλος, with for instance Copenhaver opting for 'androgynous', Chambers translating 'masculine-feminine' and Nock 'mâle-et-femelle', [12] with the common suggestion that it is an epithet for the unity of apparent opposites, metaphysically in a blending of two different philosophical ancient traditions one of which was Stoicism, the other deriving from Plato [13] and, as I am inclined to favour, alchemically as described and as illustrated in texts such as *De Alchimia Opuscula Complura Veterum Philosophorum* first published in 1550 CE.



ἀρρενόθηλος

Another alternative is 'hermaphrodite' based on the myth of the child of the gods Hermes and Aphrodite, Hermaphroditus who was often associated with matters of a carnal kind, as for example in the myth of the nymph Salmacis.

Whatever the suggestions, there is as far as I know no corollary with the male god of patriarchal traditions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, for Poemandres goes on to explain in v.14:

When she beheld such unceasing beauty - he who possessed all the vigour of the viziers and was the image of theos - she lovingly smiled, for it was as if in that Water she had seen the semblance of that mortal's beautiful image and, on Earth, his shadow. And as he himself beheld in that Water her image, so similar to his own, he desired her and wanted to be with her. Then, his want and his vigour realized, and he within that image devoid of logos, Physis grasped he whom she loved to entwine herself around him so that, as lovers, they were intimately joined together. [14]

ὃν ἰδοῦσα ἀκόρεστον κάλλος πᾶσαν ἐνέργειαν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἔχοντα τῶν διοικητόρων τήν τε μορφήν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐμειδίασεν ἔρωτι, ὡς ἅτε τῆς καλλίστης μορφῆς τοῦ Ἀνθρώπου τὸ εἶδος ἐν τῷ ὕδατι ἰδοῦσα καὶ τὸ σκίασμα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. ὁ δὲ ἰδὼν τὴν ὁμοίαν αὐτῷ μορφήν ἐν αὐτῇ οὖσαν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι, ἐφίλησε καὶ ἡβουλήθη αὐτοῦ οἰκεῖν· ἅμα δὲ τῇ βουλῇ ἐγένετο ἐνέργεια, καὶ ὥκησε τὴν ἄλογον μορφήν· ἡ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν· ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν.

The personified Physis (φύσις) gives birth to "seven male-and-female mortals" (v.16) who become the seven viziers who surround the perceptible cosmic order in seven spheres. (v. 9)

Hence why I incline toward the view that Theos, (θεός) and The Theos (ὁ θεός) and The Father of several of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum are not equivalent to the God of the Christian tradition and that to render ὁ θεός and θεός of such tractates by the term God is a mistake. Hence my somewhat iconoclastic view that the hermeticism of the eight tractates I have translated and commented on [3] are not only far more redolent of Greco-Roman pagan mysticism than they are of early Christianity but also that they, contrary to the modern majority view, may well have influenced early Christianity.

Thus noesis, a personal method, a praxis, by which particular knowledge, a particular understanding, can be obtained, is of and presences that Greco-Roman pagan mysticism and the alchemical tradition that derived from it and which tradition was so well expressed in Lawh al-Zumurrud. [9]

David Myatt  
March 2024 CE

[1] John Chambers, *Hermes Trismegistus*, T&T Clark, 1882.

[2] Brian Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, Cambridge University Press, 1992

[3] David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017. (i) Printed edition: ISBN 978-1976452369 (ii) Gratis pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

The Appendix below contains the relevant extract from my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*.

[4] *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887.

[5]

*perceiveration*. νοῦς. The conventional interpretation here is 'mind', as if in contrast to 'the body' and/or as if some fixed philosophical and abstract principle is meant or implied.

This conventional interpretation is in my view incorrect, being another example of not only retrospective reinterpretation but of using a word which has acquired, over the past thousand years or more, certain meanings which detract from an understanding of the original text. Retrospective reinterpretation because the assumption is that what is being described is an axiomatic, reasoned, philosophy centred on ideations such as Thought, Mind, and Logos, rather than what it is: an attempt to describe, in fallible words, a personal intuition about our existence, our human nature, and which intuition is said to emanate from a supernatural being named Pœmandres.

In addition, one should ask what does a translation such as 'I am Poimandres, mind of sovereignty' [*vide* Copenhaver] actually mean? That there is a disembodied 'mind' which calls itself Pœmandres? That this disembodied 'mind' is also some gargantuan supernatural shapeshifting being possessed of the faculty of human speech? That some-thing called 'sovereignty' has a mind?

I incline toward the view that the sense of the word νοῦς here, as often in classical literature, is perceiverance; that is, a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed 'the body'.

Perceiverance thus describes the ability to sense, to perceive, when something may be amiss; and hence also of the Greek word implying resolve, purpose, because one had decided on a particular course of action, or because one's awareness of a situation impels or directs one to a particular course of action. Hence why, in the Oedipus Tyrannus, Sophocles has Creon voice his understanding of the incipient hubris of Oedipus, of his pride without a purpose, of his apparent inability to understand, to correctly perceive, the situation:

εἴ τοι νομίζεις κτῆμα τὴν αὐθαδίαν  
εἶναί τι τοῦ νοῦ χωρίς, οὐκ ὀρθῶς φρονεῖς.

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,  
Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

vv. 549-550

Translating νοῦς as perceiverance/perceiveration thus places it into the correct context, given αὐθεντίας - authority. For "I am Pœmandres, the perceiveration of authority" implies "What [knowledge] I reveal (or am about to reveal) is authentic," so that an alternative translation, in keeping with the hermeticism of the text, would be "I am Pœmandres, the authentic perceiveration." [ The English word authentic means 'of authority, authoritative' and is derived, via Latin, from the Greek αὐθεντία ]

*eachwhere*. An unusual but expressive (c.15th century) English word, suited to such an esoteric text. The meaning here is that, like a guardian δαίμων of classical and Hellenic culture, Pœmandres is always close by: eachwhere with you.

[6]

*quietude engendered by theos*. Ἀκλινὴς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ. With ἀκλινής understood metaphorically, cf. σοφία νοερὰ ἐν σιγῇ in v. 2.

*the seeing is not of...* In respect of φαντάζομαι, cf. XI:18, κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι.

*through the noetic actus of the cræft*. τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. In respect of 'cræft', cf. ἀνακαθαίρομενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν in v. 8. In regard to noetic, qv. the comment on σοφία νοερὰ in v. 2. In respect of actus, qv. the comment on ἐνέργεια in v. 6.



The metaphysical content of this statement, important both in respect of what immediately follows - which bears comparison with XI:18-19 (see below) - and in respect of understanding Palingenesis, has been somewhat lost in previous translations such as "with the mental energy that comes through the powers" and "with the energy the Mind gives me through the powers."

What is meant is that there is a specific type of apprehension which is vivifying, which does not depend on what is seen directly by the eyes, and which is a *cræft*, a capability, an ability, an influencing, arising from the generosity of theos and from that quietude engendered by theos. Thoth then goes on to describe what this apprehension involves: ἐν οὐρανῳ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...

*I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water... Everywhere.* ἐν οὐρανῳ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι...πανταχοῦ. Regarding this, and the aforementioned type of apprehension, cf. tractate XI:18-19,

ἐνια δὲ τῶν λεγομένων ἰδίαν ἔννοιαν ἔχειν ὀφείλει· οἷον ὃ λέγω νόησον. πάντα ἐστὶν ἐν τῷ θεῷ. οὐχ ὡς ἐν τόπῳ κείμενα (ὁ μὲν γὰρ τόπος καὶ σῶμά ἐστι, καὶ σῶμα ἀκίνητον, καὶ τὰ κείμενα κίνησιν οὐκ ἔχει)· κεῖται γὰρ ἄλλως ἐν ἄσωμάτῳ φαντασίαι. νόησον τὸν περιέχοντα τὰ πάντα καὶ νόησον ὅτι τοῦ ἄσωμάτου οὐδὲν ἐστὶ περιοριστικόν, οὐδὲ ταχύτερον, οὐδὲ δυνατώτερον· αὐτὸ δὲ πάντων καὶ ἀπεριόριστον καὶ ταχύτατον καὶ δυνατώτατον.

καὶ οὕτω νόησον ἀπὸ σεαυτοῦ, καὶ κέλευσόν σου τῇ ψυχῇ εἰς Ἰνδικὴν πορευθῆναι, καὶ ταχύτερόν σου τῆς κελεύσεως ἐκεῖ ἔσται. μετελθεῖν δὲ αὐτῇ κέλευσον ἐπὶ τὸν ὠκεανόν, καὶ οὕτως ἐκεῖ πάλιν ταχέως ἔσται, οὐχ ὡς μεταβάσῃ ἀπὸ τόπου εἰς τόπον, ἀλλ' ὡς ἐκεῖ οὔσα. κέλευσον δὲ αὐτῇ καὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπτῆναι, καὶ οὐδὲ πτερῶν δεηθήσεται. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ αὐτῇ οὐδὲν ἐμπόδιον, οὐ τοῦ ἡλίου πῦρ, οὐχ ὁ αἰθήρ, οὐχ ἡ δίνη, οὐχὶ τὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀστέρων σώματα· πάντα δὲ διατεμοῦσα ἀναπτῆσεται μέχρι τοῦ ἐσχάτου σώματος. εἰ δὲ βουληθείης καὶ αὐτὸ ὅλον διαρρήξασθαι καὶ τὰ ἐκτός εἴ γέ τι ἐκτὸς τοῦ κόσμου θεάσασθαι, ἔξεστί σοι.

Some of the matters spoken of require a certain apprehension, so consider what I say: everything is in the theos but not as if lying in a particular place - since the place is a body and also immovable and what is lain does not move - but an incorporeal representation apprehends what is lain otherwise.

Thus apprehend what embraces everything and apprehend that the incorporeal has no boundary, that nothing is swifter, nothing as mighty, since the incorporeal is boundless, the swiftest, the mightiest.

And apprehend this about yourself and so urge your psyche to go to any land and, swifter than that urging, it will be there. Likewise, urge it to go to the Ocean and again it will be swiftly there without passing from place to place but as if already there.

Urge it to go up into the heavens and it will be there without the need of any wings. Indeed, nothing will impede it: not the fire of the Sun nor Aether, nor the vortex, nor the bodies of the other stars, but - carving through them all - it will go as far as the furthest body. Should you desire to burst through The Entirety and observe what is beyond - if indeed there be anything beyond that ordered system - then it is possible for you.

[7]

*brutish*. Given the metaphysical context, and the contrast with καθαρός, ἄλογος implies more than 'irrational' or 'unreasonable'. The sense is of the unrefined, the uncultured, the brutish.

*alastoras*. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἐμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὦ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish alastoras of Materies," using the English term alastoras - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

*materies*. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

[8] *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, Book III, Chapter XXVI.

[9] Myatt, *Lawh al-Zumurrud*, 2024, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2024/02/dwm-lawh-al-zumurrud.pdf>

[10] In regard to "enfolds every arithmos [...] begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any".

This passage, with its mention of ἀριθμός, is often assumed to refer to the Pythagorean doctrine regarding numbers since ἀριθμός is invariably translated as 'number' - thus implying what the English word implies, especially in mathematical terms - even though Aristotle, in discussing ἀριθμός, wrote: ἄλλος δὲ τις τὸν πρῶτον ἀριθμὸν τὸν τῶν εἰδῶν ἓνα εἶναι, ἔνιοι δὲ καὶ τὸν μαθηματικὸν τὸν αὐτὸν τοῦτον εἶναι (Metaphysics, Book XIII, 1080b.20).

Given such a necessary distinction - and the discussion regarding ἀριθμός and Pythagoras in Book XIII, 1083b.10 et seq - as well as the fact that what ἀριθμός means here, in this tractate, and what it implies - such as the mathematical numbers 2 and 3 developing from the One - is not mentioned, I have transliterated ἀριθμός thus leaving open what it may or may not mean in relation to the particular weltanschauung being described. However, the context seems to suggest a metaphysical rather than an abstract mathematical notion, especially given what follows at the beginning of section 11: πᾶν δὲ τὸ γεννώμενον ἀτελὲς καὶ διαιρετόν.

[11]

Yet why, according to the logos of theos, does the one of self-discovery progress within themselves?

To which I replied, phaos and Life formed the father of all beings, from whence that human came into being.

You express yourself well. For phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being. Therefore if you learn to be of Life and phaos - and that you perchance are of them - then you progress to return to Life. Thus spoke Pœmandres.

Can you - who are my perceiviation - therefore tell me how I may progress to Life? For does not theos say that the human of perceiviation should have self-knowledge?

κατὰ τί δὲ «ὁ νοήσας ἑαυτὸν εἰς αὐτὸν χωρεῖ», ὅπερ ἔχει ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος; - φημὶ ἐγώ, Ὅτι ἐκ φωτὸς καὶ ζωῆς συνέστηκεν ὁ πατήρ τῶν ὄλων, ἐξ οὗ γέγονεν ὁ Ἄνθρωπος. - Εὖ φῆις λαλῶν· φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος. ἐὰν οὖν μάθῃς αὐτὸν ἐκ ζωῆς καὶ φωτὸς ὄντα καὶ ὅτι ἐκ τούτων τυγχάνεις, εἰς ζωὴν πάλιν χωρήσεις. ταῦτα ὁ Ποιμάνδρης εἶπεν - Ἀλλ' ἔτι μοι εἰπέ, πῶς εἰς ζωὴν χωρήσω ἐγώ, ἔφην, ὦ Νοῦς ἐμός; φησὶ γὰρ ὁ θεός· «ὁ ἔννοους ἄνθρωπος ἀναγνωρισάτω ἑαυτόν».

[12] A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Third Edition, 1972

[13] The problem here with such metaphysical explanations is that they assume there were specific supra-personal traditions or schools of thought distinctive enough to be taught and transmitted and later described by a term such as Stoicism, just as it has been assumed the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum represented a hermetic tradition whereas I am inclined toward the view that many if not most of the tractates present the personal weltanschauung of their authors germane to their time. That is, that rather than being representative of some axiomatical pre-existing philosophy or of some school of thought, they reproduce the insight and the understanding of individuals regarding particular metaphysical matters; an insight and an understanding no doubt somewhat redolent of, and possibly influenced by, and sometimes perhaps paraphrasing, some such existing philosophies and/or some such schools of thought; and an insight which often differs from tractate to tractate.

[14]

*Physis grasped [...] intimately joined together.* ἡ δὲ φύσις λαβοῦσα τὸν ἐρώμενον περιεπλάκη ὅλη καὶ ἐμίγησαν ἐρώμενοι γὰρ ἦσαν. The sense of μίγνυμι here is that of a physical union, a sexual joining together - not of some 'philosophical mingling' of 'forms'. Similarly, περιπλέκω is not some ordinary 'embrace' but a sexual twinning (of limbs). Cf. Hesiod, Theogony, 375 - Κρίω δ' Εὐρυβὶν τέκεν ἐν φιλότῃ μιγεῖσα Ἀστραῖόν.

---

## Appendix

### Section 22 Of Tractate XIII

#### Text

Εὐχαριστῶ σοι, πάτερ, ταῦτά μοι αἰνεῖν εὐξαμένῳ.

Χαίρω, τέκνον, καρποφορήσαντος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας τὰ ἀγαθὰ, τὰ ἀθάνατα γενήματα. τοῦτο μαθὼν παρ' ἐμοῦ τῆς ἀρετῆς σιγὴν ἐπάγγειλαι, μηδενί, τέκνον, ἐκφαί νων τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τὴν παράδοσιν, ἵνα μὴ ὡς διάβολοι λογισθῶμεν. ἱκανῶς γὰρ ἕκαστος ἡμῶν ἐπεμελήθη, ἐγώ τε ὁ λέγων, σύ τε ὁ ἀκούων. οὐρῶς ἔγνωσ σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον.

#### Translation

My thanks to you, father, for your advice regarding the invocation.

My son, I am glad that the actuality has borne good fruit, the unrottable produce. Having learned of this from me, profess silence my son about this wonder, revealing to no one the tradition of the Palingenesis, for otherwise we will be regarded as rouners. Each of us has had a sufficiency of interest: I in speaking, you in listening. Through noesis you

have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father.

## Commentary

invokation. εὔχομαι. Not 'pray' - which has too many Christian and other non-Hellenic religious connotations - but invocation, as in appeal to a deity, to call upon, to offer a laudation or an offering. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 933, ἡὔξω θεοῖς δείσας ἂν ὧδ' ἔρδιν τάδε, did you invoke the gods because you feared doing such things?

the unrottable produce. τὰ ἀθάνατα γενήματα. Literally, "the deathless/immortal produce". Taking ἀθάνατος metaphorically contrasts well

with the preceding 'bearing good fruit'. the tradition. In respect of παράδοσις, cf. παραδιδόναι μοι in v. 1. As there, the suggestion is of a disclosing of some ancestral teaching or wisdom; the disclosing by a teacher or master to a pupil.

rouners. For 'rouner' in respect of διάβολος, qv. v. 13, εἰς ὃν ὑπεμνηματι σάμην ἵνα μὴ ὦμεν διάβολοι τοῦ παντὸς εἰς τοὺς πολλούς.

<quote>

*rouner*. διάβολος. In regard to the Old English word *rouner* - denoting a person who whispers secrets or who spreads rumours in a secretive, disruptive, manner - qv. the Prologue of the 14th century *Cloud Of Unknowing*: Fleschely janglers, opyn preisers and blamers of himself or of any other, tithing tellers, rouners and tutilers of tales.

Also, cf. 2 Timothy 3:3, ἄστοργοι, ἄσπονδοι, διάβολοι, ἀκρατεῖς (unloving, unforgiving, rouners, unrestrained) where mention is made of ἀκρατής, which in this tractate is personified as one of the Alastoras.

I take the following τοῦ παντὸς as referring to keeping the silence - the secrets - as mentioned in v. 22, rather than as referring to the preceding τὸ πᾶν.

</quote>

noesis. A technical, mystical, term, qv. the comment on 'noetic sapientia' in v. 2:

<quote>

*noetic sapientia*. For a variety of reasons, I have used the term *noetic sapientia* to denote σοφία νοερὰ.

i) The metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός occur in Proclus, qv. *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887. Interestingly, Proclus associates νοερός with the three 'septenary planets' Mercury, Venus, and the Sun.

Here, σοφία νοερὰ may well suggest a particular hermetic principle which requires contextual interpretation.

ii) As noted in my commentary on Poemandres 29 - where I used the Latin *sapientia* in respect of σοφία - in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical (or esoteric) context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in the Poemandres tractate *sapientia* (for σοφία) requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation, as Sophia (for σοφία) does in tractate XI where it is there suggestive, as with Aion, Kronos, and Kosmos, of a personified metaphysical principle.

iii) In respect of νοερός, the English word 'intellectual' has too many irrelevant modern connotations, with phrases such as 'intellectual wisdom' and 'the wisdom that understands' - for σοφία νοερὰ - unhelpful regarding suggesting a relevant philosophical meaning. Hence the use of the term 'noetic' which suggests a particular type of apprehension - a perceiviation - whereby certain knowledge and a particular understanding can be ascertained.

Thus, *noetic sapientia* implies that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - that acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotatum whereby beings are given 'names' and assigned to abstractive categories with such naming and such categories assumed to provide knowledge and understanding of the physis of those beings. [In respect of physis, qv. the comment on φύσεως μιᾶς in section 12.]

In addition, given what follows - ἐν σιγῇ, 'in silence' - such knowledge and understanding does not require nor depend upon words whether they be spoken or written or thought. Hence, the 'source' of mortals is in, can be known and understood through, the silence of noetic sapientia.

</quote>

---

All translations by DW Myatt

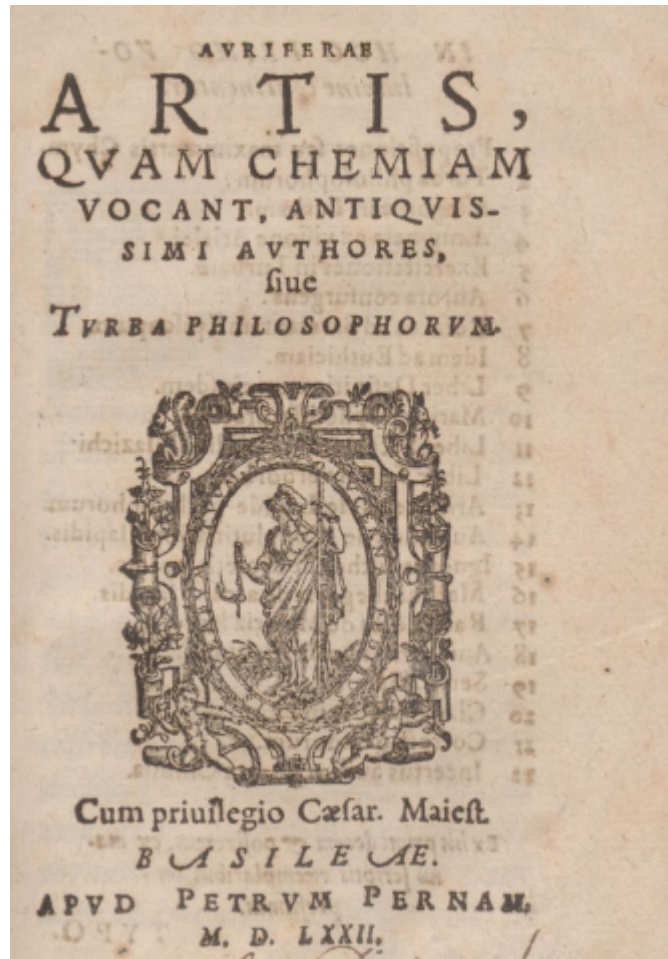
Image credit:

The beginning of tractate XIII from the book *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pœmandres*, published in Paris in 1554

This work is published under the  
Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license

## Anaximander, Imbalance, And Opposites

Three quotations attributed to the Greek philosopher Anaximander (c. 610 – c. 546 BCE) one quotation in Greek and two in Latin, have been much debated over the centuries with all three suggesting an ancient *weltanschauung* which resonated with later *weltanschauungen* such as hermeticism and alchemy, which is possibly why the two Latin quotations were included in a 1572 CE compendium on alchemy in the section titled *Turba Philosophorum* itself a Latin translation of an earlier Arabic text by Muḥammad ibn Umayl al-Tamimi (c.900–960 CE).



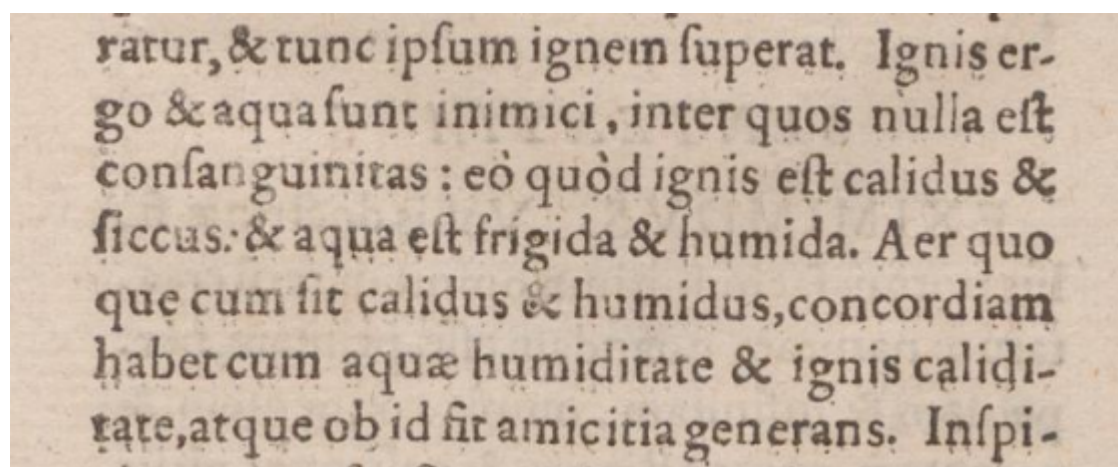
My methodology in interpreting these quotations derives from my understanding that certain Latin and Greek words as originally used by their authors represent philosophical, or hermetic or alchemical, principles or substances or what we now term 'archetypes', and that it is therefore erroneous to translate them by English words which over centuries may and often have acquired ordinary meanings, such as air', 'water', 'fire'.

The question of such principles is, as Aristotle wrote in his *Metaphysics*, (3.996a) an interesting and complex question answered by many in certain ways with others proposing as first principles Fire, Water, and Air - ἄλλος δέ τις πῦρ ὁ δὲ ὕδωρ ἢ ἄερα - which leads him to the question of whether or not such principles are universal or individual.

### The Latin Texts

The Latin of the first quotation in *Turba Philosophorum* is:

ignis ergo et aqua sunt inimici, inter quos nulla est consanguinitas, eo quod ignis est calidus et siccus, aqua vero frigida et humida



Auriferae artis, quam chemiam vocant, antiquissimi authores, sive turba philosophorum  
Basileae, 1572

My interpretation of meaning:

Ignis <sup>1</sup> and Acua <sup>2</sup> are not friendly for there are no ties of kindred among them: Ignis is fiery and resolute while Acua is cool and moistening. <sup>3</sup>

1. Retaining the Latin rather than simply translating here as 'fire' because Ignis (πυρὸς) is a philosophical, hermetic and alchemical, principle (or substance or archetype) as in the Corpus Hermeticum. For example:

σὺ εἶ ὁ θεός. ὁ σὸς ἄνθρωπος ταῦτα βοᾷ διὰ πυρός, δι' ἀέρος, διὰ γῆς, διὰ ὕδατος, διὰ πνεύματος, διὰ τῶν κτισμάτων σου

You are theos. Your mortal loudly calls out: through Ignis [Fire, πυρός], through Air, through Earth, through Water, through Pneuma, through your created beings.

Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song, Tractate XIII, 20. Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum*, 2017. ISBN 9781976452369

Compare also a fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη [Diogenes Laertius, 11:7]

The foundation/base/essence of all beings [ 'things' ] is pyros to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons.

2. Acua. I have opted for a somewhat obscure regional (Sardinian) variant of aqua rather than simply retaining the Latin or translating as 'water' because aqua is now a somewhat commercialized word with the Greek ὕδωρ, like Pyros, a hermetic and alchemical principle, qv. Corpus Hermeticum, Tractate IV, 1:

τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλωι τινὶ σῶματι ὅμοιον· οὔτε γὰρ πῦρ ἐστὶν οὔτε ὕδωρ οὔτε ἀήρ οὔτε πνεῦμα, ἀλλὰ πάντα ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. ἀγαθὸς γὰρ ὢν, μόνωι ἑαυτῷ τοῦτο ἀναθεῖναι ἠθέλησε καὶ τὴν γῆν κοσμήσαι,

That Being has no body that can be touched or seen or measured or which is separable or which is similar to any other body: not of Fire [pyros] or Water [ὕδωρ] or of Pneuma even though all such things are from that Being. (Myatt, op.cit.)

3. (i) qv. "moistness and consistency" in the second quotation, below. (ii) cf. William Caxton: "one somer is softe and moyste, and another is drye and wyndy." Myrroure of the Worlde, 1481 CE.

ooo

The Latin of the second quotation in Turba Philosophorum is:

doceo autem vos stellas esse igneas et aera ipsas continere et quod si aeris humiditas et spissitudo non esset, quae solis flammam separaret a creaturis, omnia subsistentia sol combureret.

The Arabic of Muḥammad ibn Umayl al-Tamimi (c.900–960 CE) from *Kitab al-ma 'al-waraqī* containing the quotation is:

قال أكسميدوس الجرعاني [ . . . ] فالماء والنار عدوان ليست  
بينهما قرابة واشجة لأن النار حارّة يابسة والماء بارد رطب  
فأمّا الهواء فحارّ رطب فأصلح ما بينهما برطوبته مع حرارته  
فصار الهواء مصلحا بين الماء والنار. والأرواح كلهم من لطيف  
بخار الهواء تكون لأنه إذا اجتمعت السخونة مع الرطوبة فليس  
لهما بد من أن يخرج من بينهما لطيف يصير بخارا أو ربحا لأن  
حرارة الشمس تُخرج

My interpretation of meaning:

I inform you that stars are Igneous, that Aeros <sup>1</sup> bounds them, and it is the moistness and consistency <sup>2</sup> of Aeros which keeps the flames of the Sun separate from created beings for otherwise the Sun would consume them.

1. Aeros. Here as in hermeticism and alchemy, ἀήρ is a particular philosophical principle, substance, or archetype. As in Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for example v.5:

καὶ ὁ ἀήρ ἐλαφρὸς ὦν ἠκολούθησε τῷ πνεύματι, ἀναβαίνοντος αὐτοῦ μέχρι τοῦ πυρὸς ἀπὸ γῆς καὶ ὕδατος, ὥς δοκεῖν κρέμασθαι αὐτὸν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ

Since Air [ἀέρος, Aeros] is agile, it followed the pneuma, up and above Earth and Water [Acua] and as far as Fire [Pyros], to be as if it were hanging from that, there.

2. spissitudo from spissus, qv. σπιδής and cf. πυκνός. Here 'consistency' rather than 'broad' or 'dense'.

## The Greek Text

ἀρχὴ <...> τῶν ὄντων τὸ ἄπειρον <...>

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν [Theophrastus/Simplicius]

My interpretation of meaning:

< [the] source ... of beings is the un-definitive <sup>1</sup> ...>

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment <sup>2</sup> to balance, <sup>3</sup> one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. <sup>4</sup>

1. Because the beginning is fragmentary it is difficult to provide a satisfactory explanation of what is meant, although many explanations have been suggested over many centuries including the speculation that 'apeiron' is the first principle, the ἀρχή, of beings, with ἄπειρον almost invariably translated by words such as the boundless, infinity, the limit-less.

However, ἄπειρον is a privation of πεῖραρ, a lack of completion; a lack of a verdict; or, often overlooked, a lack of a means, a method, an instrument, to reach a particular conclusion or of a tool do a particular task, qv. Odyssey: 3.431-435, and my translation:

ὥς ἔφαθ', οἱ δ' ἄρα πάντες ἐποίπνου. ἦλθε μὲν ἄρ βοῦς  
ἐκ πεδίου, ἦλθον δὲ θοῆς παρὰ νηὸς εἰσης  
Τηλεμάχου ἔταροι μεγάλητορος, ἦλθε δὲ χαλκεὺς  
ὅπλ' ἐν χερσὶν ἔχων χαλκήϊα, πείρατα τέχνης,  
ἄκμονά τε σφυρὰν τ' ἐυποίητόν τε πυράγρην,  
οἷσιν τε χρυσὸν εἰργάξετο

Such were his words, and all of his sons occupied themselves with those things  
So that an ox arrived from the fields; the comrades of the vigorous Telemachus  
Arrived from their well-balanced ship; the goldsmith arrived bearing in his arms  
Those bronze tools with which he accomplished his art:  
A hammer, anvil and well-made fire-tongs  
Which he used to work gold.

Hence my suggestion here that what Anaximander might have implied is that the source of beings is 'un-definitive', incapable of resolution because we do not possess the tools, such as words, to resolve it. Which explains why he goes on to contrast δίκη with ἀδικία, which balance and unbalance I explain below.

2. Payment as in a debt owed or because of some personal need or mistake, as in our relatively recent phrase 'debt of honour'. The debt may be to a person or persons or as in ancient times to a deity either in expiation or in the hope of avoiding a misfortune wrought by some deity, for example by the "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies" of the gods, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες.

The suggestion therefore might be that the offer of payment relates to those who, despite the fact that source of beings is 'un-definitive', having tried to define it and in the process constructed a dialectic of opposites, and thus brought conflict, realize their error. As Heraclitus noted:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

3. In respect of δίκη it here simply implies balance in contrast to the unbalance, the privation of balance, that is ἀδικία. The translations 'order' or justice or 'fitting' - like 'disorder' or injustice or 'unfitting' for ἀδικία - are too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' or justice or what is considered fitting in contrast to their assumed dialectical opposites.

4. In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' (in ancient times by a sundial; in later times by a mechanical clock) but 'the passing' of living or of events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

### Imbalance And Opposites

What I find in these fragments attributed to Anaximander is germane to our perception of our human physis and of how we have tried to understand it through words - denotata - and thus by certain named 'principles', and that ultimately we have to accept that we cannot, should not, attempt to understand it through words which bring-into-being a named opposite and thus a conflict between those perceived, believed in, and conflicting dialectical opposites with their attendant strife, discord, enmity, hatred, and suffering. That such a wordful perception is un-definitive because the tools we have hitherto manufactured and rely on are useless.

Thus, my own fallible answer to Aristotle's question of whether or not such principles are universal or individual is that they are ineluctably personal, with all we can presently hope do is use the wordless knowing of our empathy, and of our own pathei-mathos, as a guide.

David Myatt

21<sup>st</sup> February 2024



## Lawh al-Zumurrud

### Prefatory Note

An interpretation of meaning of the Arabic text Lawh al-Zumurrud from Sirr al-khaliqa, dating from between the eighth and ninth century CE. <sup>1</sup> The text is also known by its Latin title Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis and by the English title The Emerald Tablet.

I have added some footnotes to explain unusual words in my interpretation, with an Appendix providing the Latin text from the *Secretum Secretorum* as given in a critical edition, published by Oxford University Press in 1920, of a thirteenth century manuscript in the Bodleian Library. Which text, for some reason, does not mention telesmi, although an alternative sixteenth century Latin text, translated by Isaac Newton, does. <sup>2</sup>

Much has been written about the 'emerald tablet' which is considered to be one of the primary texts of hermetic philosophy and of alchemy. For this second edition I have extended my footnotes, included as Appendix II an updated version of my 2017 essay *Talismata In The Picatrix*, and corrected a few typos.

David Myatt  
January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024  
Revised February 2024

1. Ursula Weisser, *Buch über das Geheimnis der Schöpfung und die Darstellung der Natur (Buch der Ursachen) von Pseudo-Apollonios von Tyana*. Sources and Studies in the History of Arabic-Islamic Science. Aleppo, 1979.

2. The Latin is "Pater omnis telesmi totius mundi est hic". Newton's manuscript is Keynes MS 28.

---

Veritas is veritas <sup>1</sup>  
For the higher is as the lower  
With the lower as the higher.

The signs <sup>2</sup> were from The One  
As all beings are from The One  
Through one design:  
The father, the Sun,  
The mother, the Moon,  
The Pnuema, <sup>3</sup> the womb  
The Earth, the nourishment.

Telismata: <sup>4</sup> of the father  
Guardian of balanced signs.  
Pyros, <sup>5</sup> the Earth  
Separating the harsh from the gentle.  
With the gentle, <sup>6</sup> noble,  
Ascending from Earth to Empyrean <sup>7</sup>  
Descending from Empyrean to Earth  
Influencing the higher, the lower,  
The gentle, the harsh:  
The illumination of the illuminated.

Thus, it is for this the Magnum Opus <sup>7</sup> came-into-being  
For I am Hermes Trismegistus of The Wisdom.

---

### Notes

1. Veritas. I have used the Latin *veritas* rather than the English word 'truth'. As noted in my commentary on v.14 of chapter One of the Gospel of John,

I have chosen the Latin *veritas* in order to avoid the disputations - philosophical and otherwise - and the assumptions that the English word 'truth' so often now imputes and engenders, with the reader (or the listener) thus having to reflect on what *veritas* might, in this context, signify. In addition, ἀληθείας here suggests not some abstract, impersonal, 'truth' but rather truthfulness, sincerity, integrity: the type of person that Jesus of Nazareth is. In respect of 'veritas' suggesting such truthfulness and sincerity, qv. the entry for *veritas* in Lexicon Totius Latinitatis, volume 4b.

2. Signs, cf. σημεία in relation to God, qv. The Gospel of John, and the Signs of Allah as mentioned in the Quran. It is notable that the Gospel of John has σημεῖον and not δυνάμεις as in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, For example, in John 3:2, οὐδεὶς γὰρ δύναται ταῦτα τὰ σημεῖα ποιεῖν ἢ σὺ ποιεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ ἢ ὁ θεὸς μετ' αὐτοῦ, "for no one is able to do the signs you do unless Theos is with them."

Since *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* was a translation of an Arabic text, σημεία here instead of δυνάμεις or *miraculum* seems apposite.

3. The Pneuma. The Wind as archetype, as a hermetic principle, cf. tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum:

ἀδιορίστων δὲ ὄντων ἀπάντων καὶ ἀκατασκευάστων, ἀποδιωρίσθη τὰ ἐλαφρὰ εἰς ὕψος καὶ τὰ βαρέα ἐθεμελιώθη ἐφ' ὑγρᾶι ἄμμωι, πυρὶ τῶν ὅλων διορισθέντων καὶ ἀνακρεμασθέντων πνεύματι ὀχεῖσθαι· καὶ ὥφθη ὁ οὐρανὸς ἐν κύκλοις ἑπτὰ, καὶ θεοὶ [ταῖς] ἐν ἄστρον ἰδέαις ὀπτανόμενοι, σὺν τοῖς αὐτῶν σημείοις ἅπασι, καὶ διηρθρώθη ... σὺν τοῖς ἐν αὐτῇ θεοῖς, καὶ περιελίγη τὸ περικύκλιον ἄερι, κυκλίωι δρομήματι πνεύματι θείωι ὀχούμενον.

With all beings unformed and not yet presenced,  
What was lightsome was separated out, upward  
And what was burdensome set in fluidic ground  
With all defined through Fire, then elevated - and conveyed - by Pneuma.  
Thus the heavens became perceivable in seven spheres,  
Deities represented in the arrangements of the stars,  
With the outer revolving in the æther, and circulating by the Pnuema of theos.

4. Telismata, rather than the later English word 'talisman'. As I wrote in *Telesmata In The Picatrix*, included as Appendix II,

"Telesmata is from Greek τέλεσμα via the post-classic Latin telesma and is possibly the origin of the English word talisman, dating as that English word does from 1638.

τέλεσμα in Ancient Greek meant a payment, or an offering to offset a debt or for services rendered. According to my fallible understanding, in Hellenistic times it acquired the sense of an object intended as an offering to the gods, and to lesser divinities such as daemons, as a mark of respect or in order to seek their favour or ward off their wrath. Thus if a person had toiled to make the offering, the telesma, or had at the very least exchanged goods or money for it, it was believed that such labour or such an exchange revealed that one had earned their protection or their help. The more valuable the object, the more help or protection they might expect.

This belief in such offerings and their efficacy was an integral part of not only the diverse Greco-Roman paganus weltanschauungen but also of many other paganus weltanschauungen around the world, past and present, founded as such weltanschauungen are on the understanding, on the ancestral wisdom, or on the intuition that we mortals are part of a living cosmos with the gods (the divinities) and Nature considered as living beings (or as archetypes, manifestations of cosmic forces) who and which can affect us and who have affected us – as individuals, and as communities – in terms of good fortune and misfortune."

5. Pyros. Fire as archetype, cf. Heraclitus as recounted by Diogenes Laërtius:

ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναιβεις τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαιβπάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

The foundation/base/essence of all beings [ 'things' ] is pyros to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons.

6. Gentle, πρᾶος, a mild, balanced, temperament as in my translation of 5:1–10 of The Gospel Of Matthew, μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν, "Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth", qv. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>

7. Empyrean. Not 'heaven', but οὐρανός - Empyrean - the abode of the Greco-Roman gods, and also suitable for the abode of those mortals gifted by the Egyptian gods with an after-life. As I noted in my translation of 1:3 of The Gospel Of John:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εἰδῆμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

Given that *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* was a translation of an Arabic text the sense of "Ascending from Earth to Empyrean" is also apposite because it does not directly refer to the Christian heaven.

An alternative translation would be Celestial, as in my translation of a passage from Book I, Chapter One, of Ficini's *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*:

Novem studiosorum duces.

Quicumque iter illud asperum arduumque et longum ingrediuntur, quod quidem vix tandem ad excelsum novem Musarum templum assiduo labore perducit, novem omnino itineris huius ducibus indigere videntur. Quorum primi quidem tres in coelo, tres sequentes in animo, postremi tres in terra nos ducunt.

Nine guides for the studious.

Those proceeding along that perilous, arduous, tedious, journey will, following difficulties, finally be brought to the Temple of the Nine Muses for that journey requires nine guides to enable it to be reached: the first three toward the Celestial; the next three toward the Anima, 4 and the last three to guide us [back] to The Earth.

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2024/01/dwm-notes-on-ficini.pdf>

8. Magnum Opus. The work of hermeticism, as for example explained in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and the aim of alchemy which is Lapis Philosophicus. In the *Poemandres* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticism* this is described as the journey, the ἄνοδος, through the seven spheres:

καὶ οὕτως ὁρμαῖ λοιπὸν ἄνω διὰ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρῃ τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τὴν ἐπιθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τετάρτῃ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴν προφανίαν ἀπλεονέκτητον, καὶ τῇ πέμπτῃ τὸ θράσος τὸ ἀνόσιον καὶ τῆς τόλμης τὴν προπέτειαν, καὶ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰς ἀφορμὰς τὰς κακὰς τοῦ πλούτου ἀνενεργήτους, καὶ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ζώνῃ τὸ ἐνεδρεῦον ψεῦδος.

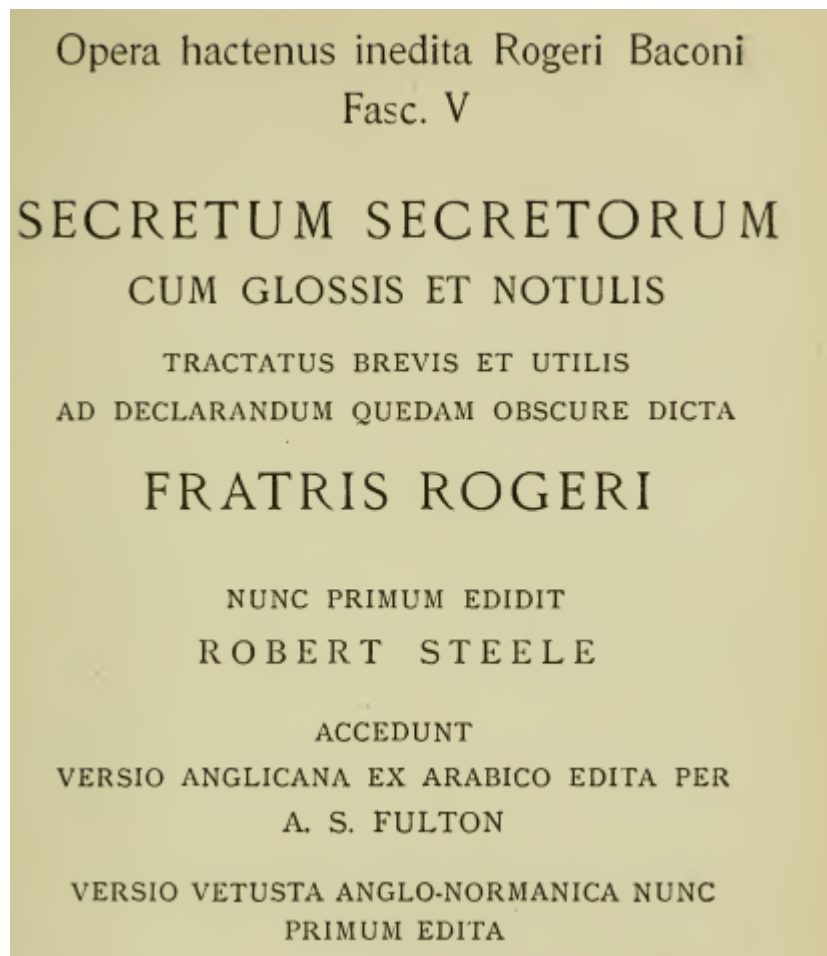
Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

---

## Appendix I

### The Latin Text From *Secretum Secretorum*



Veritas ita se habet et non est dubium, quod inferiora  
superioribus et superiora inferioribus respondent.

Operator miraculorum unus solus est Deus, a quo descendit<sup>1</sup> omnis operatio mirabilis.  
Sic omnes res<sup>2</sup> generantur ab una sola substantia<sup>3</sup>, una sua sola dispositione.  
Quarum pater<sup>4</sup> est Sol,<sup>4</sup> quarum mater est Luna.<sup>5</sup>  
Que portavit ipsam naturam per auram in utero,<sup>6</sup> terra impregnata est ab ea.<sup>7</sup>  
Hinc<sup>8</sup> dicitur Sol causatorum pater, thesaurus miraculorum, largitor virtutum.  
Ex igne<sup>9</sup> facta<sup>11</sup> est terra<sup>10</sup>.  
Separa terrenum ab igneo,<sup>12</sup> quia subtile dignius est grosso, et rarum spisso. Hoc fit sapienter et discrete. Ascendit enim de terra in celum, et ruit de celo in terram.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>1</sup> per creacionem et regimen universale mundi.  
<sup>2</sup> scilicet, naturales.  
<sup>3</sup> scilicet, celestis.  
<sup>4</sup> scilicet generans et produciens sub Deo.  
<sup>5</sup> Sic omnes res, scilicet, naturales, istud potest exponi alkimi-  
stice et figurative de auro et argento, quia in rebus humanis  
temporalibus omnia fiunt per aurum et argentum. Unde per  
solem potest intelligi aurum et per lunam argentum, et hic est mos  
alkimistarum. Et terra quantum ad res humanas impregnatur  
et fecundatur per argentum, et aurum est pater miraculorum, et  
cetera, id est, per ipsum fiunt mirabilia in humanis rebus.

Et inde interficit<sup>1</sup> superiorem et inferiorem virtutem.  
Sic ergo dominatur<sup>2</sup> inferioribus et superioribus | et tu<sup>89 a.</sup>  
dominaberis sursum et deorsum, tecum enim est lux lu-  
ninum,<sup>3</sup> et propter hoc fugient a te omnes tenebre. Virtus  
superior vincit omnia.<sup>4</sup>  
Omne enim rarum agit in omne densum. Et secundum  
disposicionem majoris mundi currit hec operatio, et propter  
hoc vocatur Hermogenes triplex in philosophia.<sup>5</sup>

## Appendix II

### Telesmata In The Picatrix

Telesmata is from Greek τέλεσμα via the post-classic Latin telesma and is possibly the origin of the English word talisman, dating as that English word does from 1638, with τέλεσμα in Ancient Greek meaning a payment, or an offering to offset a debt or for services rendered. According to my fallible understanding, in Hellenistic times it acquired the sense of an object intended as an offering to the gods, and to lesser divinities such as daemons, as a mark of respect or in order to seek their favour or ward off their wrath. Thus if a person had toiled to make the offering, the telesma, or had at the very least exchanged goods or money for it, it was believed that such labour or such an exchange revealed that one had earned their protection or their help. The more valuable the object, the more help or protection they might expect.

This belief in such offerings and their efficacy was an integral part of not only the diverse Greco-Roman paganus weltanschauungen but also of many other paganus weltanschauungen around the world, past and present, founded as such weltanschauungen are on the understanding, on the ancestral wisdom, or on the intuition that we mortals are part of a living cosmos with the gods (the divinities) and Nature considered as living beings (or as archetypes, manifestations of cosmic forces) who and which can affect us and who have affected us – as individuals, and as communities – in terms of good fortune and misfortune.

For such understanding, such ancestral wisdom, or such intuition included the insight that some mortal deeds were wise and some mortal deeds were unwise because wise deeds were those which aided or did not upset the natural cosmic balance and because unwise deeds – acts of hubris – did upset the natural cosmic balance and invited, sooner or later, retribution by the divinities, be such retribution personal (against the hubriatic individual) or against the family and descendants of that individual or against the community that the hubriatic individual was a part of. A pattern of hubriatic deeds which both Aeschylus and Sophocles so well described: Aeschylus in the Oresteia, and Sophocles in his Antigone and his Oedipus Tyrannus.

In respect of the Greek belief in such divinities and asking for their help there is of course that beautiful poem by Sappho [1]

ποικιλόθρον' ἀθανάτ' Ἀφρόδιτα,  
παῖ Δίος δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε,  
μή μ' ἄσαισι μηδ' ὀνίαισι δάμνα,  
πότνια, θῦμον,

ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ', αἶ ποτα κατέρωτα  
τὰς ἔμας αὔδας αἰοῖσα πήλοι  
ἔκλυες, πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα  
χρύσιον ἦλθες

ἄρμ' ὑπασδεύξαισα· κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον  
ῶκεες στροῦθοι περὶ γᾶς μελαίνας  
πύκνα δίννεντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνωϊθε-  
ρος διὰ μέσσω·

αἶψα δ' ἐξίκοντο· σὺ δ', ὦ μάκαιρα,  
μειδιαίσαισ' ἀθανάτῳ προσώπῳ  
ἦρε' ὅττι δηῦτε πέπονθα κῶττι  
δηῦτε κάλημμι

κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι  
μαινόλαι θύμῳ· τίνα δηῦτε πείθω  
μαῖσ' ἄγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα; τίς σ', ὦ  
Ψά]πφ', ἀδικήει;

καὶ γὰρ αἶ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,  
αἶ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ', ἀλλὰ δώσει,  
αἶ δὲ μὴ φίλει, ταχέως φιλήσει  
κῶκ ἐθέλοισα.

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλέπαν δὲ λῦσον  
ἐκ μερίμναν, ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσαι  
θῦμος ἱμέρρει, τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὖτα  
σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

Deathless Aphrodite – Daughter of Zeus and maker of snares –  
On your florid throne, hear me!  
My lady, do not subdue my heart by anguish and pain  
But come to me as when before  
You heard my distant cry, and listened:

Leaving, with your golden chariot yoked, your father's house  
To move beautiful sparrows swift with a whirling of wings  
As from heaven you came to this dark earth through middle air  
And so swiftly arrived.

Then you my goddess with your immortal lips smiling  
Would ask what now afflicts me, why again  
I am calling and what now I with my restive heart  
Desired:

Whom now shall I beguile  
To bring you to her love?  
Who now injures you, Sappho?  
For if she flees, soon shall she chase  
And, rejecting gifts, soon shall she give.  
If she does not love you, she shall do so soon  
Whatsoever is her will.

Come to me now to end this consuming pain  
Bringing what my heart desires to be brought:  
Be yourself my ally in this fight.

By the time the manuscripts of the Picatrix were written, as translations of a translation of an Arabic manuscript dating from some three or more centuries earlier, the concept of telemata seems to have become somewhat divorced from its pagan origins since the Picatrix begins with a doxology to a singular God – *Ad laudem et gloriam altissimi et omnipotentis Dei cuius est revelare suis predestinatis secreta scienciarum* – echoing as it does the doxology to Allah, Al-Ahad, in that earlier Arabic manuscript and containing as that Arabic manuscript does several quotations from the Quran.

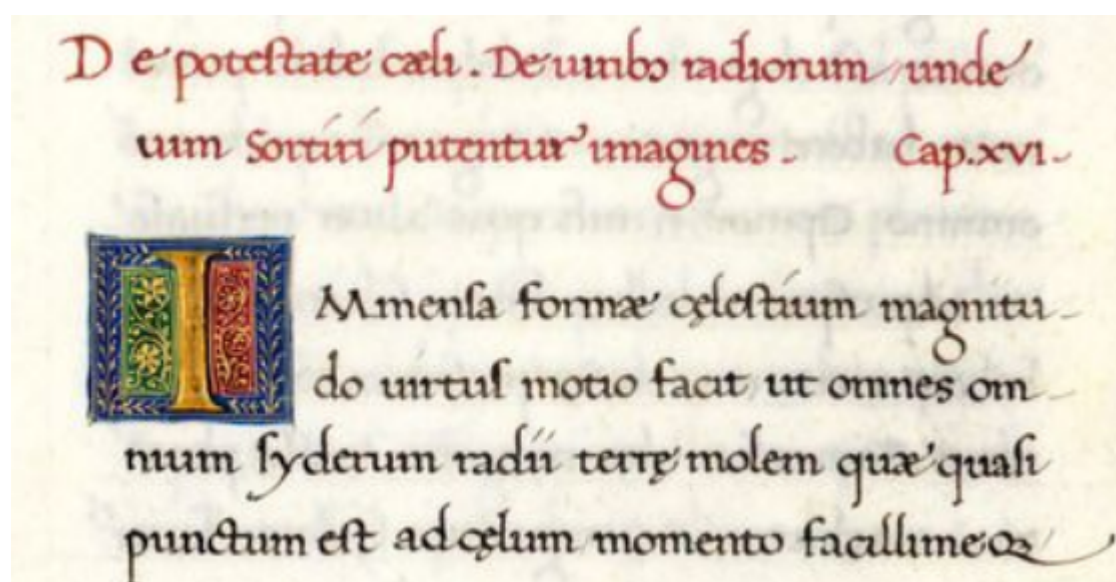
Thus, and again according to my fallible understanding, it seems to me that, given the importance attached in both the Latin and the Arabic text to telemata [2] – the locus has, despite such doxologies, moved away from the pagan understanding of mortals as an integral (Ciceronian) balancing part of the cosmos, as part of Nature and of their community and personally aware of the consequences of hubris, toward the εἶδος – the abstraction – of mortals as individuals who can by telemata and other means achieve certain personal desires or bring about certain changes beneficial to themselves. Almost as if telemata and other similar means have replaced the numinous, the pagan, awareness of our status as mortals who depend on the harmony that the older divinities represented, manifest as this awareness is in the phrase *memento homo* [3]. A phrase adopted by the Roman Catholic church in the form "memento homo quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris," [4] and which church, despite its faults, perhaps for centuries kept alive at least something of the pagan understanding of the error of hubris, its awareness of our temporary mortal life and of our fallible mortal nature.

DW Myatt  
2017

Note: This text is an edited version of a communication sent this year to someone who had enquired about the relation, if any, between the talismans described in the Latin text entitled Picatrix and Greco-Roman pagan beliefs.

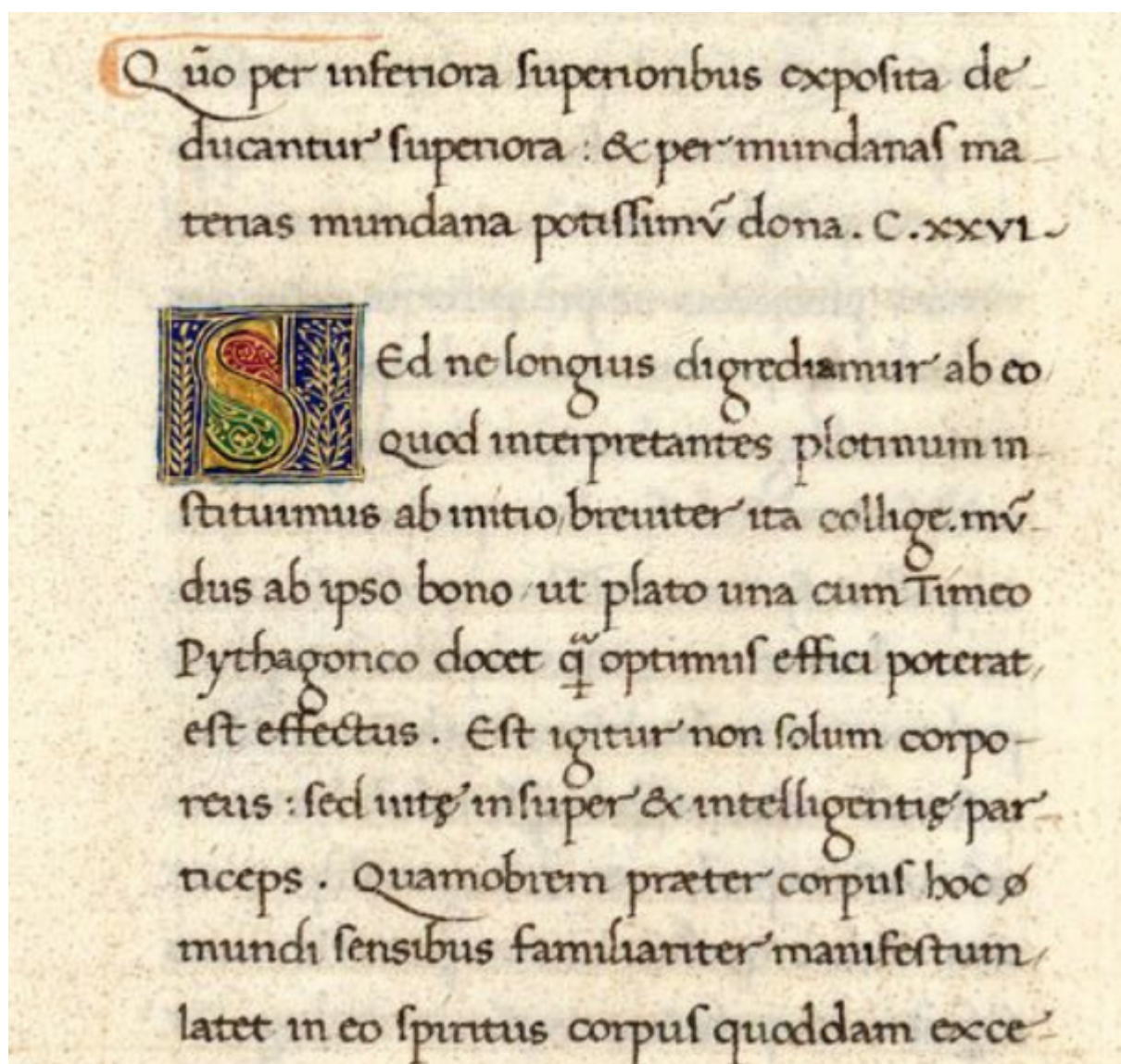
[1] My translation. The Greek text is that of Lobel and Page, *Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, Oxford 1955.

[2] In the Picatrix the word used is imago, usually (in my opinion) mis-translated by the fairly recent (c.1638) word 'talisman' and which English word implies 'a semblance', a crafting by someone of something material which of itself presenced, was a semblance of, what was 'higher', numinous, by something which was 'lower', material, with such a presencing described by Marsilii Ficini in his *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*.



From a 1489 manuscript:  
Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XVI





De Vita Coelitus Comparanda, XXVI

Interestingly, imago occurs in the Latin version of the nine doxologies - v. 31 - of the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, cuius universa natura imago nata est, with the original Greek being οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφυ which I translate as "you who engender all physis as eikon", with eikon suggestive of what Maximus of Constantinople in his Mystagogia [Patrologiae Graeca, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the eikon of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

[3] Although the use of a similar phrase about mortality in the Triumphus is disputed, there is evidence to suggest that during those victory processions in Rome the triumphant General was reminded by someone of his mortality, qv. M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007. p. 272f.

[4] "Recall, mortal, you are dust and you will revert to being dust."

---

All translations by DW Myatt

Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license

---

## Some Notes On De Vita Coelitus Comparanda And Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis

### Chapter One

The genesis of this essay was some correspondence from a reader of my translation of *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* who enquired about the Latin text of the two illustrations from a manuscript of *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* that I included. In response, I translated the relevant passages, in the process discovering some interesting connections to the Corpus Hermeticum, alchemy, and the Art (Latin Ars) of μαγικός as understood by Pliny the Elder, Ovid, and Tacitus, with Pliny in Book XXX, iii relating that Homer's Odyssey is based upon that Art and recounts a legend that Pythagoras, Empedocles, Democritus, and Plato, all journeyed abroad to learn that Art. <sup>1</sup>

The context of those passages in my *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis* are the heading and the beginning of Book I, Chapter One of *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* and the heading and the beginning of Book III.

The heading and the beginning of Book I, Chapter One of *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* are, together with my translation:

Novem studiosorum duces.

Quicumque iter illud asperum arduumque et longum ingrediuntur, quod quidem vix tandem ad excelsum novem Musarum templum assiduo labore perducit, novem omnino itineris huius ducibus indigere videntur. Quorum primi quidem tres in coelo, tres sequentes in animo, postremi tres in terra nos ducunt.

Nine guides for the studious. <sup>2</sup>

Those proceeding along that perilous, arduous, tedious, journey will, following difficulties, finally be brought to the Temple of the Nine Muses for that journey requires nine guides to enable it to be reached: the first three toward the Celestial; <sup>3</sup> the next three toward the Anima, <sup>4</sup> and the last three to guide us [back] to The Earth.



Καλλιόπη, The Beautiful-Voiced Muse  
(Pio Clementino Museum, Vatican City)

ταῦτ' ἄρα Μοῦσαι ἄειδον, Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι,  
ἐννέα θυγατέρες μεγάλου Διὸς ἐκγεγαυῖαι,  
κλειώ τ' Εὐτέρπη τε Θάλεια τε Μελπομένη τε  
Τερψιχόρη τ' Ἑρατώ τε Πολύμνιά τ' Οὐρανίη τε  
Καλλιόπη θ' ἥ δὲ προφερεστάτη ἐστὶν ἀπασέων.



Such were the things the Muses who dwell on Olympus sang:  
those nine daughters born of Mighty Zeus.  
Cleio, Euterpe, Thaleia, Melpomene,  
Terpsichore, Erato, Polyhymnia, Urania,  
and Kalliope who is pre-eminent among them all.

ooo

The heading and the beginning of Book III are, together with my translation:

Marsilii Ficini Florentini Liber De Vita Coelitus Comparanda compositus ab eo inter Commentaria eiusdem in Plotinum.

In quo consistat secundum Plotinum virtus favorem coelitus attrahens, scilicet in eo, quod anima mundi et stellarum daemonumque animae facile alliciuntur corporum formis accommodatis.

A book by Marsilius Ficinus the Florentine Concerning Acquiring Life From The Celestial, and written around his commentaries on Plotinus.

Following Plotinus, what ability is there that can worthily presence <sup>5</sup> the celestial? It is this: when the Forms <sup>6</sup> correspond to their corporeality, the anima-mundi <sup>7</sup> and the anima of the stars and of daemons <sup>8</sup> can be obtained and accommodated.

Which places into context Ficini's use in Chapter XXVI of Book III of the alchemical expression Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, which is a restatement of an expression from the Arabic text in *Sirr al-khaliqa* dating from several centuries earlier, which I translated as

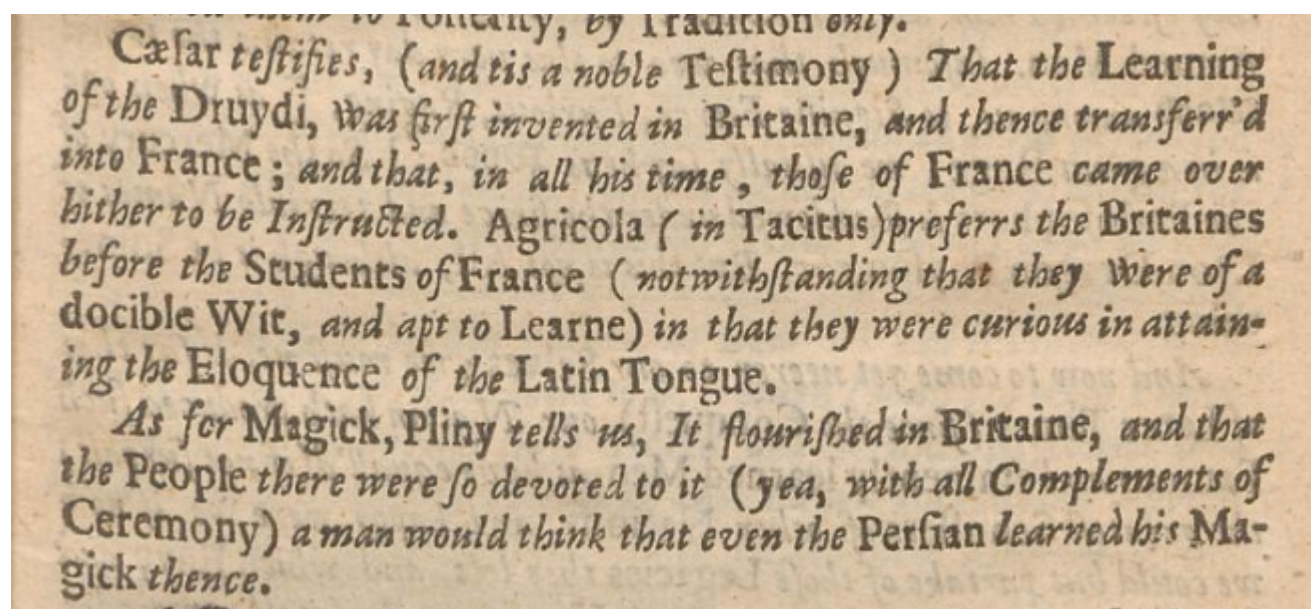
For the higher is as the lower  
With the lower as the higher.

Which brings us to the Latin text of the two manuscript illustrations mentioned above published in my Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis.

ooo

#### Notes On Terms Used

1. The term μαγικός - Latin magicas - was later translated, in my view mistranslated, as 'magick' and which 'magick' was described by Elias Ashmole in relation to the Druids in his *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum* published in 1652:



2. Studiosus. Studios, rather than 'eager'.

3. Celestial rather than 'heavenly' since stars and planets are meant.

4. Anima. Retaining the Latin, and not translating as 'soul' since it is a basic hermetic and alchemical principle later appropriated and reinterpreted by Carl Jung. The context is the expression "anima mundi" which Ficini goes on to use and which is usually translated as "world-soul" - German Weltseele - whereas what is implied is ψυχὴ κόσμου with κόσμος as suggested in the Corpus Hermeticum (Poemandres:17, Tractate VIII:1 and by Cicero) an ordered structure which includes we human beings, the Earth, and the celestial.

Thus an alternative would be to translate as psyche, as in Tractate VIII, 1 of the Corpus Hermeticum:

Περὶ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, ὃ παῖ, νῦν λεκτέον, τρόπῳ μὲν ποίῳ ἀθάνατος ἡ ψυχὴ, ἐνέργεια δὲ ποταπὴ ἐστὶ συστάσεως σώματος καὶ διαλύσεως. περὶ οὐδὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν ὁ θάνατος, ἀλλὰ νόημά ἐστιν ἀθανάτου προσηγορίας, ἢ κενὸν ἔργον ἢ κατὰ στέρησιν τοῦ πρώτου γράμματος λεγόμενος θάνατος ἀντὶ τοῦ ἀθάνατος. ὁ γὰρ θάνατος ἀπωλείας ἐστίν· οὐδὲν δὲ τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἀπόλλυται. εἰ γὰρ δεύτερος θεὸς ὁ κόσμος καὶ ζῶιον ἀθάνατον, ἀδύνατόν ἐστι τοῦ ἀθανάτου ζώιου μέρος τι ἀποθανεῖν· πάντα δὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ μέρη ἐστὶ τοῦ κόσμου, μάλιστα δὲ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, τὸ λογικὸν ζῶιον.

It is regarding psyche and the corporeal that, my son, we now must speak: of why psyche is deathless and how its vigour assembles and separates the corporeal. For there is no death of what-is, only an apprehension grounded in the denotatum 'deathless', either through unavailing toil or, by discarding the important part, that what is called deathless is deathful. That is, for the deathful there is a loss. But nothing of the Kosmos is ever lost, for if Kosmos is a second theos and a deathless living being then it is not possible for any portion of such a deathless living being to be lost since all beings of Kosmos are part of Kosmos, as most certainly are mortals, the noetic living being.

Notes of the translation:

corporeal. σῶμα. Here, the context - qv. for example the following τῶν γὰρ οὐρανίων τὰ σώματα μίαν τάξιν ἔχει in section 4 and τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἁσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ in section 5 - suggests corporeal rather than a literal body. A subtle distinction, between "of the nature of matter" and a specific type of "physical body". Compare also the fourth tractate: αἰὲν ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἐνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα· τοῦτο γάρ ἐστι τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἀπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν, οὐδὲ ἄλλῳ τινὶ σώματι ὅμοιον.

apprehension. νόημα. cf. Poemandres 3, "I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings."

denotatum. For προσηγορία. In this case, the denotatum - the naming - is the word 'deathless'.

the noetic living being. τὸ λογικὸν ζῶιον. The word λογικός imputes the sense of both the faculty of speech and the faculty of thought, something well-expressed by Sophocles: φθέγμα καὶ ἀνεμόεν φρόνημα καὶ ἀστυνόμους ὀργὰς ἐδιδάξατο καὶ δυσαύλων πάγων ὑπαίθρεια καὶ δύσομβρα φεύγειν βέλη παντοπόρος, (Antigone, 355f).

There is also in Tractate XI:14 the enigmatic

ζωὴ δὲ ἐστὶν ἔνωσις νοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς· θάνατος δὲ οὐκ ἀπώλεια τῶν συναχθέντων, διάλυσις δὲ τῆς ἐνώσεως

Life is the enosis of perceiverance and psyche, while death is not the loss of what was joined but the end of enosis.

Which as I explained in my commentary on the verse returns us to the mention of Plotinus by Ficini:

enosis. ἔνωσις. A transliteration given that it is a mystical term with a particular meaning and describes something more than is denoted by the ordinary English word 'union'. It was, for example used by Plotinus, by Maximus of Constantinople, and was part of the mystic philosophy attributed to Pseudo- Dionysius, The Areopagite - qv. Migne, Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca. vol IV, 396A. 1857 - and denoted, for Plotinus, a desirable ascent (ἄνοδος) and a 'merging with The One', and for both the Areopagite and Maximus of Constantinople a self-less mystical experience of God.

To translate as psyche has a long history in English, dating back to 1559. In 1918, DeWitt Burton published a monograph - listing, with quotations, the various senses of πνεῦμα - titled *Spirit, Soul, and Flesh: The Usage of Πνεῦμα, Ψυχὴ, and Σὰρξ in Greek Writings and Translated Works from the Earliest Period to 225 AD* (University of Chicago Press, 1918).

5. The term 'presenced' is from the noun 'presencing' (derived from the Latin praesentia) and means "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established."

6. Formis. Forms, such as a human manufactured shape/artefact. Thus the physical, earthly, corporeal form or shape is a mimesis (μίμησις) of a celestial or several celestial ones. Which corporeal Form could be a telesmata into which what is celestial can be presenced, drawn-down. Regarding telesmata, qv the appendix *Telesmata In The Picatrix* in my *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis*.

7. See note 4 for the context.

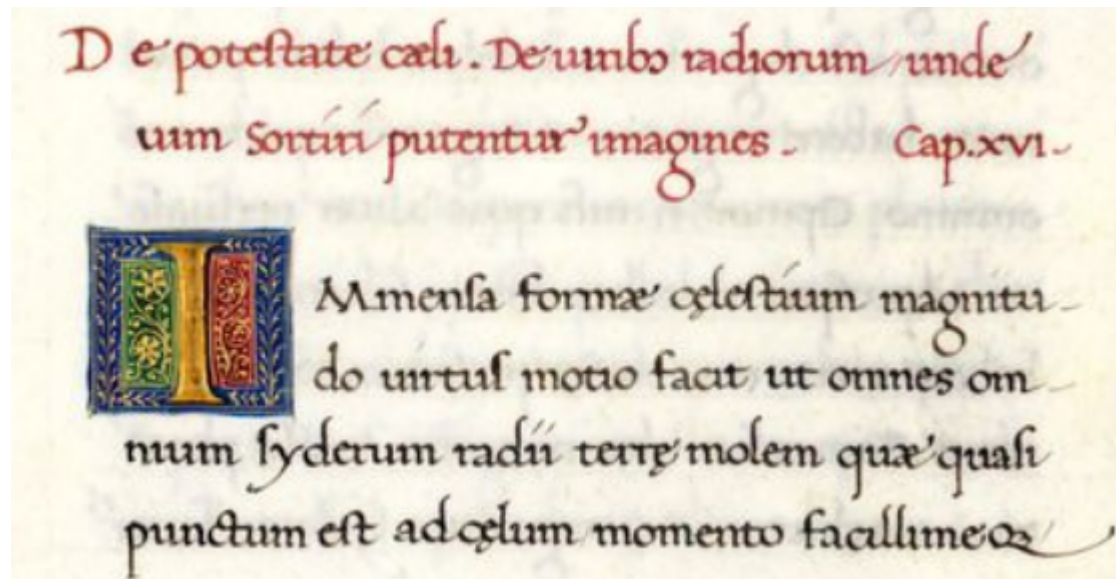
8. Daemons. The guardian entities of sacred places who could bring fortune or misfortune to human beings, qv. the saying attributed to Heraclitus as recorded by Diogenes Laërtius:

ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

The foundation/base/essence of all beings [ 'things' ] is pyros to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχὴ and Dæmons.



## Chapter Two



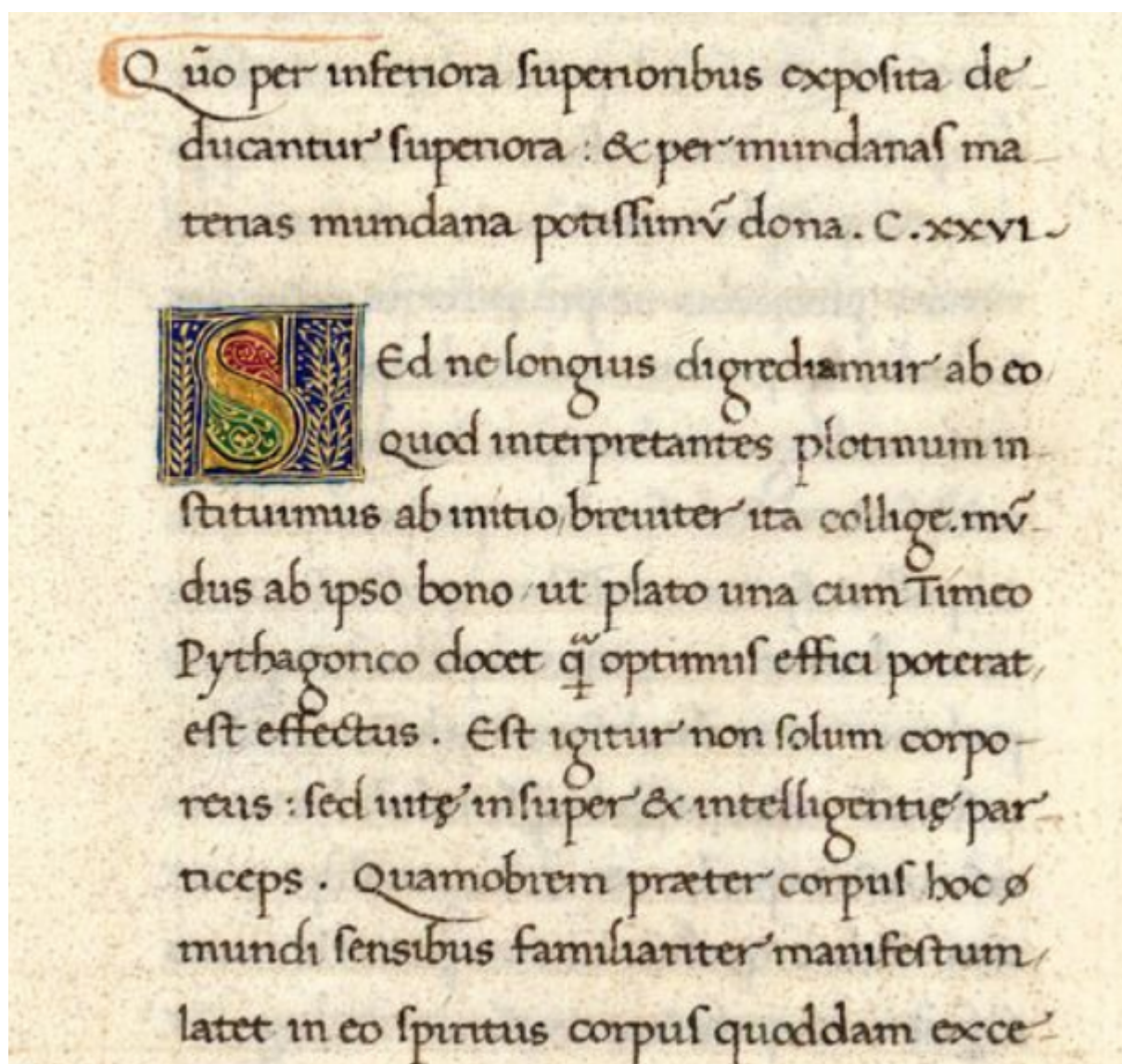
The Latin text and my translation of this image, from my Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis, of the beginning of Ficini's Chapter XVI are:

De potestate coeli. De viribus radiorum, unde vim sortiri putentur imagines.

On the operation of the celestial. On the potency of emanations <sup>1</sup> on which telemata <sup>2</sup> are considered to draw.

Immensa ferme coelestium magnitudo, uirtus, motio facit, ut omnes omnium siderum radii terrae molem, quae quasi punctum est ad coelum, momento facillimeque usque ad centrum recti penetrent, quod omnes astronomi confitentur.

The immense magnitude, potency and movement of the celestial results in the emanations entering the bulk of the Earth, just a point compared to the celestial, with no difficulty and to its centre, as all astronomers agree.



The Latin text and my translation of this part of Chapter XXVI:

Quo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced <sup>3</sup> therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Sed ne longius digrediamur ab eo, quod interpretantes Plotinum instituimus ab initio, breviter ita collige: mundus ab ipso bono (ut Plato una cum Timaeo Pythagorico docet), quam optimus effici poterat, est effectus. Est igitur non solum corporeus, sed vitae insuper et intelligentiae particeps.

However, to be concise lest we digress too far from our interpretation of Plotinus: Mundus <sup>4</sup> as Plato and Timeus the Pythagorean informed us, was by Fairness <sup>5</sup> itself able to be optimally arranged. Thus it is not solely corporeal, but with Life and Perceiveration <sup>6</sup> and the ability to perceive and discern what is perceived.

ooo

## Notes On Terms Used

1. Emanations. Not 'rays' or anything similar. Emanations of the divine body' sent down as human beings:

κόσμον δὲ θεῖου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ζώου ἀθανάτου ζῶιον θνητόν, καὶ ὁ μὲν κόσμος τῶν ζώων ἐπλεονέκτει τὸ ἀείζων, καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τὸν λόγον καὶ τὸν νοῦν. θεατῆς γὰρ ἐγένετο τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἐθαύμασε καὶ ἐγνώρισε τὸν ποιήσαντα.

A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings,  
For just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them  
So did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos  
Because of Logos and Perceiverance.  
Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them,  
Gaining knowledge of their creator.

Tractate IV:2

Apposite here is my commentary of that verse:

Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading:  
Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Also, in respect of ἄνθρωπος I have used here - as in my *Poemandres* - the gender neutral 'human being' instead of the more usual 'man', and also - as there - occasionally used the term 'mortal' when the context suggests it. Regarding 'the cosmic order' (κόσμος) itself qv. *Poemandres* 7; 14, and *Ιερός Λόγος* 4:

τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἢ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις φύσει ἀνανεουμένη· ἐν γὰρ τῷ θείῳ καὶ ἡ φύσις καθέστηκεν

The divine is all of that mixon: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis  
For Physis is presenced in the divine.

mixon. Alternate (old) spelling of mixtion, meaning the condition or state of being mixed, melded, compounded, combined.

2. Regarding telemata, qv the appendix *Telesmata In The Picatrix* in my *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis*.

3. The term 'presenced' is from the noun 'presencing' (derived from the Latin praesentia) and means "the action or process of making some-thing manifest and/or present and/or established."

4. Mundus. Not simply 'the earth' but κόσμος, as in Tractate IV of the *Corpus Hermeticum*: κόσμον δὲ θεῖου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings."

5. Bonum. Not an abstract or theological 'good' subject to exegesis, but personal fairness, equity, balance, nobility manifest in deeds.

6. Intellegentia. Not 'intelligence' which has too many irrelevant modern connotations but perceiveration as in Tractate IV:2-4 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

κόσμον δὲ θεῖου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ζώου ἀθανάτου ζῶιον θνητόν, καὶ ὁ μὲν κόσμος τῶν ζώων ἐπλεονέκτει τὸ ἀείζων, καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τὸν λόγον καὶ τὸν νοῦν. θεατῆς γὰρ ἐγένετο τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἐθαύμασε καὶ ἐγνώρισε τὸν ποιήσαντα.

τὸν μὲν οὖν λόγον, ὃ Τάτ, ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐμέρισε, τὸν δὲ νοῦν οὐκέτι, οὐ φθονῶν τισιν· ὁ γὰρ

φθόνος οὐκ ἔνθεν ἔρχεται, κάτω δὲ συνίσταται ταῖς τὸν νοῦν μὴ ἔχόντων ἀνθρώπων ψυχαῖς. – Διὰ τί οὖν, ὦ πάτερ, οὐ πᾶσιν ἐμέρισε τὸν νοῦν ὁ θεός; – Ἡθέλησεν, ὦ τέκνον, τοῦτον ἐν μέσῳ ταῖς ψυχαῖς ὥσπερ ἄθλον ἰδρῦσθαι.

– Καὶ ποῦ αὐτὸν ἰδρύσατο; – Κρατῆρα μέγαν πληρώσας τούτου κατέπεμψε, δοὺς κήρυκα, καὶ ἐκέλευσεν αὐτῷ κηρύξαι ταῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καρδίαις τάδε· βάπτισον σεαυτὴν ἢ δυναμένη εἰς τοῦτον τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ πιστεύουσα ὅτι ἀνελεύσει πρὸς τὸν καταπέμψαντα τὸν κρατῆρα, ἢ γνωρίζουσα ἐπὶ τί γέγονας. ὅσοι μὲν οὖν συνῆκαν τοῦ κηρύγματος καὶ ἐβάπτισαντο τοῦ νοός, οὗτοι μετέσχον τῆς γνώσεως καὶ τέλειοι ἐγένοντο ἄνθρωποι, τὸν νοῦν δεξάμενοι· ὅσοι δὲ ἤμαρτον τοῦ κηρύγματος, οὗτοι μὲν οἱ λογικοί, τὸν νοῦν μὴ προσειληφότες, ἀγνοοῦντες ἐπὶ τί γεγόνασιν καὶ ὑπὸ τίνων,

[2] A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings,  
For just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them  
So did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos  
Because of Logos and Perceiverance.  
Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them,  
Gaining knowledge of their creator.

[3] Thus, Thoth, to all mortals logos was assigned, but not perceiverance  
Even though there was no ill-will, for such ill-will arrives not from there  
But below, associated with mortals whose Psyche does not convey Perceiverance.  
On account of what, father, did theos not assign perceiverance to all?  
Son, the desire was to position it half-way between those psyches, as a reward.

[4] Where, then, was it placed?  
In that large repleteful chaldron which was dispatched down  
With an envoy assigned to declaim to the hearts of mortals:  
If you have strength enough, immerse yourself in the chaldron  
Should you accept you can ascend -  
Having discovered how you came-into-being -  
To the one who dispatched down that chaldron.  
The many who understood that declaration and were immersive with perceiveration  
Gained a certain knowledge, becoming more complete mortals  
Through having received the perceiveration  
While the many who misunderstood that declaration,  
Having logos without the addition of perceiveration,  
Are unperceptive regarding how and why they came-into-being.

---

## Summa

The "perilous, arduous, tedious, journey" mentioned by Ficini can lead to the knowledge of "the operation of the celestial [and] the potency of emanations" and thus to an understanding of telesmata and of how they are a mimesis, μῖμησις.

The tedious journey can be an alchemical one, a hermetic ἄνοδος as described in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum; or a studious one involving alchemical texts such as Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis, Ghayat al-Hakim and its Latin version titled Picatrix; or a more 'occult' one, based on mimesis and the Art of μαγικός, such as outlined in De Vita Coelitus Comparanda.

David Myatt  
January 26<sup>th</sup> 2024

ooo

## Bibliography

§ David Myatt, *Tabula Smaragdina Hermetis*, e-text, 2024, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2024/01/myatt-tabula-smaragdina-hermetis.pdf>

§ David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum*, e-text 2017. (i) Printed version, ISBN-13: 978-1976452369 (ii) Gratis pdf, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

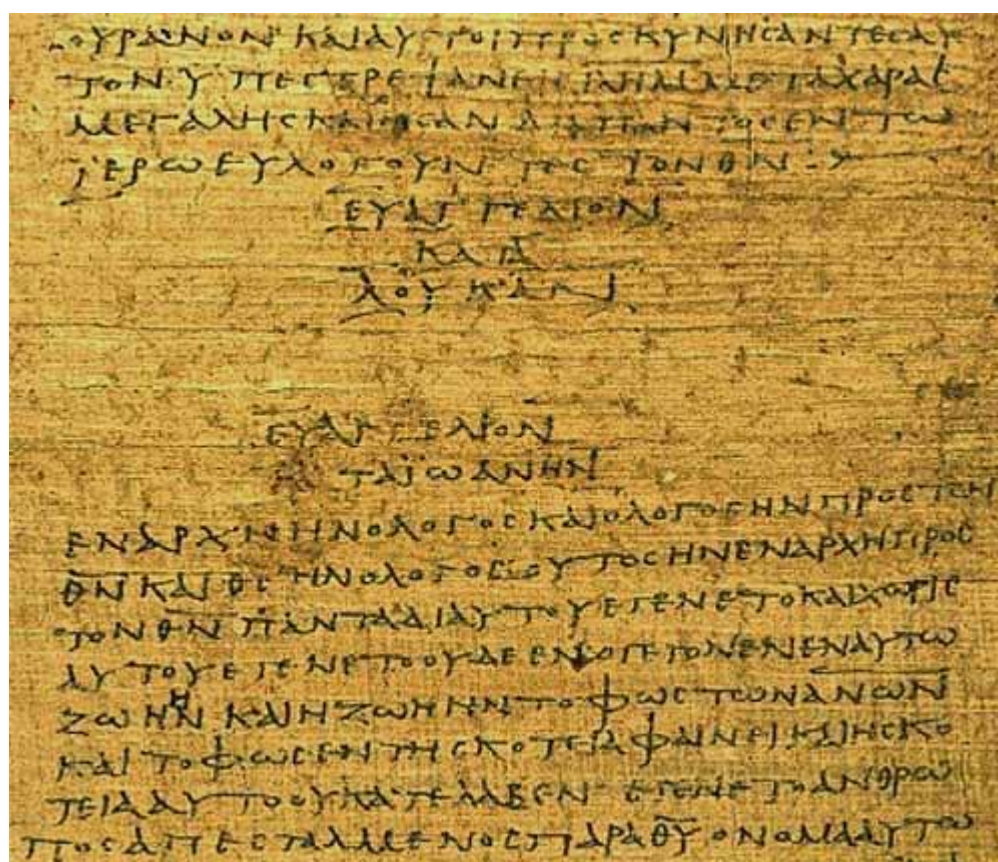
---

All translations by DW Myatt

Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license

---





## The Gospel According to John

### Translation And Commentary

#### Volume I

#### Chapters 1 - 5

David Myatt

#### Preface

This is the first of five projected volumes containing my complete translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John.

In respect of the Greek text, I have followed Nestle-Aland (NA28), although I have on occasion favoured some variant reading such as from the Textus Receptus (Stephanus, 1550) or from a particular MSS with such departures noted in the commentary and which commentary illustrates my methodology and thus my interpretation, which is of seeking to understand the meaning of certain Greek words in their historical context and of searching for appropriate English words to express that meaning and not the "meaning" that particular English words may now convey to the detriment of understanding this particular Gospel in that historical context.

In terms of layout of the translation, I follow the tradition of the Anglo-Saxon version - adopted by both Wycliffe and Tyndale - of placing each verse on a separate line and capitalizing the initial letter of each verse.

2017

Image credit:

Papyrus Bodmer XIV-XV (P75). c. 175-225 CE . Gospel of John, Chapter 1, vv.1 ff. Vatican Library.

## Introduction

### A New Interpretation

The genesis of this interpretation of meaning was some marginal notes I made, some forty years ago while a Christian monk, in my copy of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον.

During my time in that monastery many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [i], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

In the matter of minutiae, I had then some doubts as to why θεὸς there is not ὁ θεὸς as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. But arguments were made regarding why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it was argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, were considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ [ii] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to such doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay-Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung brought-into-being by some thirty years of πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I now approach the text as I have in the past three decades approached the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, and as I have sometimes done in translations of mine from Hellenic Greek (for example, tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum), I have here opted for some transliterations (such as logos and theos) in an endeavour to avoid reading into the text the meanings that some of the English words conventionally used in other translations – and given in lexicons – may now suggest, or do suggest often as a result of over a thousand years of exegesis. For the hope is that such transliterations, and eschewing some other English words that have traditionally been used, will enable the reader to approach and to appreciate the text in a new way, sans preconceptions, and hopefully intimate how it might have been understood by those – both pagans and new converts – who first heard or read this evangel in the formative years of Christianity before Christian doctrine became formalized, before disputations about heresy, and before there were extensive theological commentaries on the text.

To give just two examples. (i) In 8.7 and in respect of ἀναμάρτητος I have eschewed the common translation of ἁμαρτία by English word 'sin' and which English word, through centuries of Christian exegesis and preaching, has become a theological abstraction and a pejorative term, whereas the the original meaning of the English word syn imputed the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; of in some way overstepping the bounds or transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus of accepting responsibility for such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis. While my translation of 'mistake' (in 8.7) and 'error' (in 1.29) may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. Thus the interpretation of this particular verse is "So, as they continued to ask he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake throw the first stone at her." (ii) In 1.10 – ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο – I take the sense of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν as suggesting not that "he was in the world" but rather that he was "of the world", among – with – those of the world, with his mortal body subject to pain and bodily death, with καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο thus implying not that "the world was made/created through him" but that the world was presenced in him, past, present, and future, with the English word 'presenced' – etymon: Latin praesentia – suggested by how he came to be embodied, presenced, in the Eucharist (qv. the phrase "This same presence may be called moste fitly, a reall presence, that is a presence not fained, but a true & a faythfull presence," in John Foxe's *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history: contaynyng the Actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realme*, 1570).

In several instances, in respect of choice of English words, I have taken inspiration from the Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels – the Wessex Gospels, dating from c.990 CE – as for example at 1.18 and 1.32.

[i] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[ii] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Both Wycliffe, and the King James Bible, translate as "The deep things of God."

---

## Chapter One

1 In primacy was the logos, and the logos was with Theos, and the logos was Theos.

2 For this was, in primacy, with Theos

3 Who brought into being all beings and without whom no beings would exist:

4 Who was Life and which Life was the Phaos of human beings.

5 And the Phaos illuminates the dark and is not overwhelmed by the dark.

6 There was a man, a messenger from Theos, named John

7 Who, arriving as a witness so that others might trust him, gave evidence concerning the Phaos

8 For he himself was not the Phaos but rather gave evidence regarding the Phaos:

9 Of the advent into the world of the genuine Phaos who could enlighten any person.

10 He who was of the world with the world presenced in him but whose own did not recognize him.

11 For having ventured to his own his own did not receive him

12 While those who did receive him he confirmed as children of Theos including those affirming his Nomen

13 Who were begotten not of blood nor by the design of mortals but of Theos.

14 And the Logos became corporeal and dwelt among us and we perceived his numinosity, the numinosity of the only begotten of the Father, abounding in veritas, benevolence.

15 John was a witness for him and loudly said, "This is he of whom I spoke: the one who, arriving after me, takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.

16 Out of his plenitude we have been given benevolence after benevolence

17 For while the Nomos was received from Moses, benevolence and veritas came to be through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has ever yet beheld Theos; but the being in the greada of the Father has made him known."

19 For such was the evidence John gave when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him: "Who are you?"

20 And he admitted, he did not deny but admitted, "I am not the Christ."

21 So they asked him: "Who, then? Are you Elijah?" And he said: "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

And he replied, "No."

22 So they asked him: "Who, then? For we have to give an answer to those who dispatched us. What have you to say about yourself?

23 He replied: "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places, straightening the way for the Master, just as Isaiah the Prophet said."

24 Now those dispatched were from the Pharisees

25 And they asked him, saying: "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet?"

26 John, answering them, said: "I baptize in water yet standing in your midst is someone you do not recognize

27 Who, proceeding me, arrives after me whose sandal strap I do not deserve to unfasten."

28 Such was what came to pass in Bethany, on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

29 The next day he saw Jesus approaching him and said: "Observe! The Lamb of Theos who removes the error of the world.

30 This is he of whom I said: 'Having arrived after me, he takes precedence because he came-into-being before me.'

31 Although personally unacquainted with him, it was for his discovery by Israel that I set out to baptize in water,"

32 And, as evidence, John said: "I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him.

33 And although personally unacquainted with Him, it was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.'

34 Such have I seen and such is my evidence that this is the Son of Theos."

35 Next day, John once more stood with two of his disciples

36 And, looking at Jesus as he passed them by, said: "Observe, the Lamb of Theos."

37 Hearing him say this, his two disciples followed Jesus

38 And Jesus, seeing them following him, turned around, asking: "What do you seek?"

And they replied: "Rabbi," - which is to say, when interpreted, Master - "where do you stay?"

39 He replied: "Arrive with me and you will see." So they arrived and saw where he stayed, staying with him that day: this, around the tenth duration.

40 One of the two who had followed him after having heard John was Andrew, brother of Simon Peter,

41 Who having firstly saught his brother Simon said to him: "We have found The Messias," which when interpreted is Christ.

42 And he led him to Jesus who, looking at him, said: "You are Simon, son of John, and you will be called Kephas," which, when explained, is Petros.



43 The next day Jesus went forth into Galilee and there found Philip, saying to him: "Follow me."  
44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the community of Andrew and Peter.  
45 Philip, finding Nathaniel, said to him: "We have found the one written about by Moses in the Nomos and by the Prophets: Jesus of Nazareth, son of Joseph."  
46 And Nathaniel asked him: "Has anything good ever come from Nazareth?" To which Philip replied: "Set out with me and see."  
47 When Jesus beheld Nathaniel approaching he said this about him: "Behold, a true Israelite: someone without guile."  
48 Nathaniel said to him: "From where do you know me?" In answer, Jesus said: "Before Philip called you I beheld you beside a tree of figs."  
49 To which Nathaniel replied: ""Rabbi, you are the Son of Theos, you are the King of Israel."  
50 In answer, Jesus said: "Are you persuaded because I beheld you beside a tree of figs? You will see much more than that."  
51 And he said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that you will see the sky opening and those envoys of Theos descending to and ascending around the son of a mortal."

ooo

## Chapter Two

1 On the third day there was a marriage in Cana, Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.  
2 Also invited to the wedding were Jesus and his disciples  
3 And when there was an insufficiency of wine the mother of Jesus said to him: "They do not have any wine,"  
4 And Jesus said to her: "My lady, what has that to do with you and me? For my season is not yet due."  
5 His mother said to the attendants: "Do whatever he says."  
6 And - as there were there six stone water-urns set up according to Judaeans cleansing holding two or three measures each -  
7 Jesus said to them: "Fill those urns with water." And they completely filled them.  
8 Then he said: "Now pour some out for the master of ceremonies." And they did.  
9 Thus the master of ceremonies tasted the water become wine unaware from whence it was - although the attendants, having poured it, were aware - and called out to the spouse,  
10 Saying to him: "Everyone sets out the better wine first and then, after a sufficiency is drunk, an inferior one, but you have kept the better wine until now."  
11 This was the commencement of the signs, and this Jesus did in Cana, Galilee, and thus was his numinosity manifest with his disciples trusting him.

12 After this he - with his mother, brothers, and his disciples - went down to Capernaum, staying there for not many days,  
13 And when the pascha of the Judaeans was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem,  
14 Where, in the temple, he found those sellers of oxen and sheep and doves as well as those seated changers-of-money,  
15 And, fashioning a flail from cords, he cast all of them - including the sheep and the oxen - out from the temple and poured away the coins of those changers-of-money and overturned their tables,  
16 Saying to those sellers of doves: "Take those from here. Do not make the house of my father a house of merchandise."  
17 His disciples recalled that it was written: "Enthusiasm for your house will devour me."  
18 In response, the Judaeans said to him: "What sign do you show us for you doing such things?"  
19 Jesus replied, saying to them: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it."  
20 The Judaeans said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and you will raise it in three days?"  
21 But he spoke of the temple of his body.  
22 When therefore he was raised from the dead his disciples recalled that he had said this and trusted what was written and the word that Jesus had spoken.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at pascha on the feast-day, many trusted in his name having beheld the signs which he did,  
24 But Jesus did not place his trust in them since he understood everything  
25 And did not need anyone to give evidence regarding a person, aware as he was of the person within.

ooo

## Chapter Three

1 Now there was a Pharisee - a man called Nicodemus, a leader of the Judaeans -  
2 Who, arriving at night, said to him: "Rabbi, we recognize that you are a teacher, arriving from Theos, for no one is able to do the signs you do unless Theos is with them."  
3 In answer, Jesus said to him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born anew they are unable to behold the Kingdom of Theos."  
4 Nicodemus said to him: "How can a person be born when they are old? How are they able to twice enter the womb of the mother?"  
5 Jesus answered: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that if someone is not born of Water and Spiritus they are unable to enter the Kingdom of Theos.  
6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spiritus is spiritus.  
7 Do not be astonished that I said to you to that it is needful for you to be born anew.

8 The wind blows where it will, and when you hear its sound you do not know from whence it came or whence it goes. So it is for everyone who is born of the Spiritus."

9 In reply, Nicodemus said to him: "How are such things able to exist?"

10 Jesus answered, saying to him: "You - a Magister of Israel - do not apprehend such things?

11 Verily verily I say unto you that what we recognize, we can talk about, and what we have observed we can give evidence concerning, and our evidence has not been accepted.

12 Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien?

13 And no one has ascended into Empyrean without having descended out from Empyrean, the son of a mortal who is in Empyrean,

14 For just as Moses elevated that serpent in a forsaken place so will the son of a mortal be elevated

15 So that all those trusting in him might have life everlasting.

16 For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

17 For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him.

18 Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

19 And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful.

20 For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed.

21 But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

22 After this, Jesus and his disciples, having arrived in the land of the Judaeans, stayed there together, for he was baptizing.

23 Also baptizing - in Aenon near Salim - was John, since the water there was plentiful and others had arrived to be baptized,

24 And John had yet to be hurled into a guarded cage.

25 Now, it came to pass that some disciples of John were disputing with a Judaeen about the cleansing,

26 So they went to John and said to him: "Rabbi, there on the other side of the Jordan is the one you gave evidence about. He is baptizing and everyone is going to him."

27 In answer, John said: "A person is unable to receive anything unless it is gifted to them from Empyrean.

28 You yourselves can give evidence that I said I am not the Christ but was dispatched before him.

29 He who has an espousess is the spouse, and the friend of the spouse - who stands by him and listens - is joyous with joy because of his words. Hence, my own joy is complete.

30 It is necessary that he continues to grow and that I wane.

31 The one who arrives from above is above everything while the one from the Earth is of the Earth and speaks about the Earth: the one who arrives from Empyrean is above everything.

32 He gives evidence about what he observed and heard and yet no one accepts his evidence.

33 Whomsoever accepts his evidence certifies by their seal that Theos is steadfast,

34 For the one dispatched by Theos speaks the words of Theos since he does not apportion Spiritus.

35 The father loves his son and has placed all things in his hands:

36 Whomsoever trusts in the son shall have life everlasting but whomsoever does not trust the son shall not see that life; rather, the anger of Theos abides on them.

ooo

#### Chapter Four

1 Now, when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus had made more disciples and baptisms than John

2 Even though it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples,

3 He left Judaea and went back again into Galilee

4 With him of necessity having to pass through Samaria.

5 Thus did Jesus arrive in a town in Samaria called Sychar near to the plot of land that Jacob had gifted to Joseph his son

6 Where the well of Jacob was. And Jesus, wearied by his walking, sat down beside that well: this, around the sixth duration.

7 When a Samaritan woman arrived to haul-out water, Jesus said to her: "Grant me to drink,"

8 For his disciples had departed to the town to purchase food,

9 With the Samaritan woman saying to him: "How do you, a Judaeen, ask to drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" For Judaeans do not use Samaritan things.

10 Jesus answered and said to her: "Had you been aware of the gift of Theos and who it was saying to you 'grant me to drink,' you would have asked of him and he would have gifted you with living water."

11 The woman said to him: "Sir, you do not have anything to haul-out with and the well is deep. From where then is this living water that you have?

12 Are you better than our ancestor Jacob who gifted us with this well which he himself drank from as did his sons and livestock?"

13 Jesus answered and said to her: "Whomsoever drinks this water will thirst again

14 But whomsoever would drink of the water I gift them would not ever thirst. Instead, the water I gift them would be in them a source of water rising up to life everlasting."

15 The woman said to him: "Sir, grant me that water so I never thirst nor have to be here, hauling."

16 To her he said: "Go, call your spouse and return here."

17 The woman answered, saying to him: "I do not have a spouse."

Jesus replied: "It is good that you said you have no spouse.

18 Although you have had five spouses, he whom you are with now is not your spouse. Thus, you told the truth."

19 The woman said to him: "Sir, I deem you are a prophet.

20 Our ancestors gave reverence on this mountain but you say that the necessary place of reverence is in Jerusalem."

21 Jesus said to her: "My lady, trust me. There is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem.

22 You reverence what you do not recognize; we reverence what we recognize, for deliverance is of the Judaeans.

23 But a season is arriving - and is here, now - when the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity. And the Father seeks those who so reverence him.

24 Theos is Spiritus, and it behoves those reverencing him to give reverence in spiritus and sincerity."

25 The woman said to him: "I am aware that the Messias - called the Christ - is arriving. When he arrives, he will disclose everything to us."

26 Jesus said to her: "I am: who speaks to you."

27 It was then that the disciples arrived and, although they had wondered why he was speaking with a woman, none of them asked "What are you enquiring about?" or "Why are you speaking to her?"

28 The woman, leaving her water-urn, departed for the town and said to the people there

29 "Follow! Behold a man who related to me everything I have ever done. Could it be the Christ?"

30 So they went forth from the town to arrive near to him.

31 Meanwhile, the disciples made a request of him, saying: "Rabbi, eat."

32 But he said to them: "I have food to eat that you do not recognize."

33 Then the disciples said among themselves: "Did anyone provide, for him to eat?"

34 Jesus said to them: "My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

35 Do you not say: There are four moons until the harvest arrives? Behold, I say to you: raise your eyes and observe the fields for they are already nearing harvest-white.

36 The one reaping receives payment, gathering together fruit for life everlasting, so that both the one sowing and the one reaping can rejoice.

37 In this instance, there is a relevant saying: One sows and another reaps.

38 I sent you to reap that which you did not toil for but which others did toil for, and you are entering into that toil."

39 Now, many Samaritans in that town trusted in him because of the word of the woman who gave evidence: "he related to me everything I have ever done."

40 Thus when the Samaritans, arriving, were near him they invited him to stay with them. And for two days he stayed there.

41 And many more trusted because of his word,

42 Saying to the woman: "We do not trust because of what you told us, for we ourselves have heard and recognize that this is indeed the Servator Of The World.

43 And, after two days, he went forth from there into Galilee,

44 For Jesus himself gave evidence that a prophet is not esteemed in his own village.

45 On his arrival in Galilee, the Galileans accepted him having observed all that he had done at the feast in Jerusalem, for they themselves had gone to that feast.

46 Then he went again to Cana of Galilee where he had made that water wine. And there was in Capernaum a royal official whose son was ill.

47 When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea he went to him to ask him to descend and heal his son who was about to die.

48 Jesus said to him: "If you do not observe signs and portents you will not trust."

49 The royal official said to him: "Sir, descend before my dear child dies."

50 Jesus said to him: "Be on your way: your son will live." The man trusted the word of Jesus that he had said to him, and went on his way.

51 And even as he was descending his servants met him, saying that his son was alive.

52 Thus he enquired of them in which duration his betterment took hold. And they said to him: "Yesterday, at the sixth duration the fever left him."

53 The father therefore learned that it was the duration when Jesus had said to him: "Your son will live," and thus he himself was trusting as was everyone in his household.

54 That was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea.

## Chapter Five

1 Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem.

2 And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades

3 In which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water

4 Since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

5 And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm.

6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

7 The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

8 Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

9 And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

10 Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

11 To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

12 So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk around?"

13 But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

14 Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

15 The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete.

16 And thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.

17 When Jesus responded to them: "My father even now labours, and I also labour,"

18 The Judaeans were even more determined to kill him since not only had he annulled the Sabbath but also because he spoke of Theos as his Father, presenting himself as equal to Theos.

19 In response, Jesus said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the son is not able to do anything on his own: only that which he observes his father doing. For whatever the father does, the son also does,

20 For the father loves the son and reveals to him all that he does. And, beyond this, he will reveal to him greater works which shall astonish you

21 Since just as the father awakens the dead, and gives life, so also the son gives life by design to whomsoever,

22 For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son

23 So that all might honour the son as they honour the father. And whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting and is not entered into the choosing but passes from death into life.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you that a season is arriving, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Theos and those who listen shall live.

26 Just as the father possesses Life within himself so he gifted the son with Life within him,

27 And also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.

28 Do not be astonished at this, for a season is arriving when all those in their burial places will hear his voice

29 And proceed forth: those who have acted honourably to anastasis of life; those who have acted dishonourably, to anastasis of the choosing.

30 For I am not able to do anything on my own. When I have listened, I choose; and my choosing is fair since I do not seek my own design but rather the design of he who sent me.

31 If I am a witness about myself then my testimony is invalid,

32 But there is another as a witness for me, and I recognize that his testimony about me is valid.

33 You inquired after John, and he was evidential to the veritas.

34 And, although the testimony I receive is not from people, I say these things that you may be rescued.

35 He: a lantern, firefull and revealing; you: desirous to seasonably exult in his phaos.

36 I however have a testimony beyond that of John, for the deeds the father gifted me that I should accomplish them - the deeds which I do - are witness that the father sent me,

37 With the father - he who sent me - a witness about me: he whose voice you have never heard, whose likeness you have never observed,

38 With his Logos not remaining within you for you do not trust the one he sent.

39 You search the writings because you suppose that there is within them life everlasting and that they are a witness about me.

40 And yet have no desire to go to me so that you might have Life.

41 I do not receive honours from people,

42 But I have recognized you: for love of Theos is not within you.

43 I have arrived in the name of my father yet you do not accept me, but if another arrives in his own name you will accept him.

44 How are you able to trust when you accept honours from one another and yet do not seek the honour that is only from Theos?

45 Do not suppose that I will accuse you before the father, for it is Moses - on whom you rely - who is the one accusing you.  
46 Had you trusted Moses, you would have trusted me for it was he who wrote about me.  
47 Thus, since you do not trust what he wrote, how can you trust what I say?

---

## Commentary

### Chapter One

1.

a) Ἐν ἀρχῇ

I have eschewed the conventional, and the somewhat bland, 'in the beginning', for the more descriptive 'in primacy', a sense which the Greek suggests.

b) λόγος

It is, in my view, better to transliterate this than give a definite interpretation such as 'Word', especially since I incline toward the view that λόγος (as the following verses indicate – qv. the note on πρὸς τὸν θεόν below) is used here both in the sense of divine wisdom as manifest in the divine Law (as for example in the LXX text of Exodus 34.28) and in reference to Jesus - the divine made manifest - thus implying a fundamental principle which describes/reveals the nature of Being and beings, and thus the relationship between Being and beings. In this case, between the divinity and we mortals, and the duties and responsibilities of mortals.

Thus the translation 'In primacy was the logos.'

c) θεὸς

A transliteration for two basic reasons. (i) Because this is the very beginning of the text, with nothing having been mentioned so far about the nature or the attributes of the deity, and (ii) because the English word God now implies a particular cultural interpretation, the assumption being of God, as father. It is here just theos, or Theos if one reads Θεόν rather than θεόν, which after much reflexion, I am inclined to do.

The nature and attributes of Theos do become revealed, as the text proceeds, and to transliterate here is to approach the text as the evangel it was, and to thus possibly appreciate how it was received by those who first heard it or read it in the formative years of Christianity.

i) In respect of Theos, the lack of the definite article in θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος formed part of a certain theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit (qv. 4.24). The basis of the controversy was whether 'the Theos' (ὁ θεός, The God) was the same or different from Theos, and if so whether Jesus, as the son of Theos, was always-existent (and thus the same as The God) or came-into-being afterwards, with the dispute later described as the Arian controversy, with 'Arianism' (the belief that Jesus was not equivalent to The God) denounced as a 'heresy'.

ii) In respect of the meaning of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος there was also some dispute on grammatical grounds and which dispute continued into the Renaissance and beyond. The conventional reading was "the logos was Theos", with the minority reading (qv. Jean Daillé) being "Theos was the logos." Although my initial reading - as evident in earlier drafts of my translation - was 'Theos was the logos' I have, after much reflection and a re-reading of pertinent texts by John Chrysostom, Origen, and others, decided on "the logos was Theos."

2.

a) πρὸς τὸν θεόν

What does πρὸς τὸν θεόν mean? Perhaps not exactly what the conventional translation of 'with' implies, given πρὸς here is a preposition (with the accusative) which is generally indicative of movement (*toward*, or to interact with, or *unto*, something) and that, for the reader of the translation, 'the Logos was *with* Theos' is not very clear. With, the reader might well enquire, in what manner? As in the sense of being beside, or close? As in the Shakespearean Heaven doth with us as we with torches do? [1] As in – a sense not relevant to the Greek here but which English usage might suggest – supporting?

The English word *with* – with all its possible meanings, recent and otherwise – is not therefore in my view altogether satisfactory in suggesting the sense of the Greek. In the subsequent verse of John – 1.42 πρὸς τὸν Ἰησοῦν – the sense is *to* Jesus, and in Hebrews 2:17 τὰ πρὸς τὸν θεόν suggests the sense of 'concerning', of relating to, which the English word *with* can also denote.

Positioned as it is between 'the primacy of the Logos' and the 'Logos was Theos', the sense – because of the repeated ἦν – suggests melded, with a free, non-literal, interpretation therefore being:

In primacy, the Logos, with Logos and Theos melded, for the Logos was Theos.

This evangel does not, therefore in my view, begin with some sort of philosophical statement of a neo-Platonist kind about some metaphysical principle termed Logos, but rather is a reminder that, for mortals, what has and had primacy was Logos understood, prior to Jesus, as the divine guidance manifest in the wisdom that is the Law, and that this wisdom, given to mortals by the divinity was, of itself and for us, a divine manifestation, a presencing, of the divinity. A sense which the mention of John the Baptist in v. 6-7 confirms, for John was sent by the divinity to testify – μαρτυρήσῃ – as to this truth. For God is Wisdom, the Law, and the Law is of God and, importantly according to the Old Testament context of this gospel and of the other gospels, how mortals could - before the birth of Jesus - know and understand and be in the presence of God. As Paul of Tarsus expressed it in relation to the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth:

πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love is the completion of the law [2]

With arrival of Jesus, the Logos is manifest in and though his life, teachings, crucifixion, death and resurrection, with reverence of and trust in Jesus reverence of and trust in Theos, with Jesus saying in 4.21 that "there is a season arriving when you will reverence the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem," and in 3.16 that "all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting."

b) Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν

This line, with its repetition of ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ and of πρὸς τὸν θεόν from line 1 is very interesting, especially in relation to οὗτος which here imputes the sense of "for *this* was in [that] primacy [already melded] with Theos," a translation which in my view is somewhat more meaningful than the conventional [3] "the same was in the beginning with God" and certainly more accurate than the "He was with God in the beginning" of some newer translations.

3.

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο

ἐγένετο – born, or (even better) *came into being*, rather than the more prosaic 'made' as if in illusion to something having been manufactured. The sense is of things – of beings – coming into being, given existence, because of and by Theos.

4.

a) ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων

Literally, "in whom The Life was" (that is, in whom The Life had being, existence) and "which Life was [became] the φῶς of human beings."

b) ἄνθρωπος – human beings, rather than the archaic 'man/Mankind'.

An alternative for ζωὴ would be 'being' in the sense of having existence as opposed to non-existence (death), suggesting "Who was Being and which being became [through Theos] the φῶς [the being] of human beings."

Given that φῶς metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φῶς instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωὴ and θεὸς and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος [4]

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

c) τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει

Here, the value of using the transliteration phaos is evident, for 'phaos illuminates the dark' rather than 'light shines into the darkness' since the suggestion appears to that there is a revealing [5] of what has been obscured; that 'phaos dispels the obscurity' as the illumination brought by the Sun dispels the obscurity that is a feature of the night, or least was, in the days when the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth was revealed, when the dark night could only partially (and not very far, in distance) be illuminated by items such as small oil lamps or by candles or by the flicker of burning torches.

5. ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν

καταλαμβάνω is an interesting word to use, suggestive here, given the context, of an activity – overcome, seize, take -

rather than 'comprehend' which is somewhat anthropomorphic.

Hence, 'not overwhelmed by', as the dark of the night cannot overwhelm the illumination that the Sun brings but rather is itself overwhelmed.

12. *Nomen*: ὄνομα. Not simply 'name' as we understand a name but rather a term, an appellation, 'a word', which expresses or signifies his very nature, his being, his physis.

13. θέλημα - not 'will' but 'design/desire', giving thus "not by the design/desire of mortals/human beings." The English term 'will' has too many modern and post-Hellenic connotations (qv. JS Mill, Nietzsche, JS Huxley, καὶ τὰ λοιπά)

14. καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ. Compare the beginning of the *ἱερός Λόγος* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum*: Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία, The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

As noted in my commentary on that tractate, 'numen' expresses the religious sense of δόξα better than ordinary (now overused) words such as 'splendour' and 'glory', and with 'numinal' more expressive and more appropriate there than 'divine'.

πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία. Regarding χάρις the English term benevolence is more appropriate than 'grace' given over a thousand years of exegesis in respect of 'grace', including the *sola gratia* of the Reformation. In respect of ἀληθεία I have chosen the Latin *veritas* in order to avoid the disputations - philosophical and otherwise - and the assumptions that the English word 'truth' so often now imputes and engenders, with the reader (or the listener) thus having to reflect on what *veritas* might, in this context, signify. In addition, ἀληθείας here suggests not some abstract, impersonal, 'truth' but rather truthfulness, sincerity, integrity: the type of person that Jesus of Nazareth is. In respect of 'veritas' suggesting such truthfulness and sincerity, qv. the entry for *veritas* in *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*, volume 4b. Interestingly, Tyndale in his 1526 translation has "which worde was full of grace, and verite," and at 1.17 has "favour and verite cam by Jesus Christ."

15. ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν

The sense of γίνομαι here is 'came-into-being' (before me), rather than simply 'was before me' for the usage is metaphysical as often in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, for example *Poemandres* 17, tractate III:3, tractate IV:4.

17. νόμος. A transliteration - *nomos* - since as with *logos* a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

18. Reading *μονογενῆς θεὸς* with NA28 and not the 'Byzantine textual' variant ὁ *μονογενῆς υἱὸς* which most translators - ancient and modern - have favoured given the difficulty of translating *μονογενῆς θεὸς* in context, although the meaning seems clear: "while no one so far has beheld Theos, the being [ὁ ὢν] in the *greada* [κόλπον] of the father has now explained [ξηγήσατο] him."

Regarding *greada*, this Old English word - qv. the tenth/eleventh century Anglo-Saxon version of Luke 16:23 - is a fitting translation of the Greek given that the alternatives, lap, and bosom, seem too anthropomorphic to be used in the context of Theos especially as "no one has ever seen him" with it only being said that Jesus has "explained" who and what Theos is. Interestingly, for this verse of the Gospel of John the Anglo-Saxon translator used the synonym 'barme' as does the Lindisfarne Gospel in respect of Luke 6:38.

19. ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων. After much consideration I have translated *Ἰουδαία* not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by *Judaeans*, given (i) that the English terms *Jews* and *Jewish* (deriving from the 13th/14th century words *gyv*/*gyw* and *lewe*) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, *Judaea* (as does the Latin *iudaeus*); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (*iudeas*) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, *æfter iudea geclensunge*, "according to *Judae*an cleansing." [6]

23. ἔφη ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῃ. I have opted for a fairly literal translation, with ἔρημος retaining its original meaning of an 'unpopulated, deserted, forsaken' place, and with βοάω suggestive of a caller 'calling out aloud' in such a place. Hence, "I, a call sounding out in forsaken places" rather than the conventional (KJV) "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness."

26. ὃν ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε. One - someone - "you do not know" in the sense of not perceiving (seeing) them; that is, not recognizing them. Cf. *συννοία δὲ δάπτομαι* *κέαρ ὁρῶν ἐμαυτὸν ὥδε προυσελούμενον* (Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 438), "disturbing things devour my heart since I recognize just how mistreated I have been."

Interestingly, the ASV of the Gospel of John has *ne cunnon* so that the text can be read "not acquainted/not familiar with." Cf. *Beowulf*:

metod hie ne cuþon,  
dæda demend, ne wiston hie drihten god,  
ne hie huru heofena helm herian ne cuþon,  
wuldres waldend. (180-183)

[they were] unacquainted with The Chief,  
Judger of deeds, and with the Lord God,  
as well as unacquainted with how to praise

29. ὁ αἴρων τὴν ἁμαρτίαν τοῦ κόσμου. As mentioned in the Preface, I translate ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake', which is quite apposite here considering the use of the singular and the preceding mention of Jesus as the Lamb of God: of Jesus having arrived to remove the error, the fault, that 'the world' has made, has fallen into, with 'the Lamb of God' thus healing the injury so caused. Which is quite different from some preacher sternly preaching about 'sin' and warning about the 'fire and brimstone' that await sinners. As Thomas Aquinas noted in his commentary on this passage, "Alia ratio ut excluderet errorem." (Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura, caput I, Lectio 14)

32.

a) τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' - both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis - now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma - with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic - does not unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies* [7].

b) ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. Conventionally, οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods (ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί), an assumption consistent with the fact that the Evangelist explains and interprets certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51).

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, שָׁמַיִם

33. ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

39. ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη. To translate ὥρα here as 'hour' is somewhat misleading given that the term 'hour' now means a fixed period of sixty minutes whereas the day of the ancient (Roman governed) milieu of the Gospel was divided into twenty-four durations or periods and which durations depended on the length of daylight (and thus the season) at the location in question, with there being twelve durations of daylight and twelve durations of night. Hence the 'tenth duration' mentioned in this verse - whether it be the tenth duration of the daylight hours or the tenth duration of the twenty-four - would not necessarily equate to what we would term 'ten o'clock' in the morning and certainly would not equate to a tenth 'hour' lasting sixty minutes. In addition, it depends on when the first duration was measured from: sunrise, or sunset, or from 'the mid-point of the night'. Which has led to debate among scholars as to whether or not John in this Gospel is, in respect of ὥρα, using Roman terminology for such periods, as well as to debates about whether the Roman durations were reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' or from sunrise. If reckoned from sunrise, then allowing for latitude and seasonal variation, this 'tenth duration' was between mid to late afternoon. If reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' then this 'tenth duration' was mid to late morning.

This fluid, local, sense of 'time' is well-expressed by the Old English word *tyd* - from whence the term *tide* - which signified a period, a duration, of the day or of a season when it was appropriate or propitious to undertake a specific task or tasks. Hence the ASV having - for ὥρα ἣν ὡς δεκάτη - *hyt wæs þa seo teoðe tyd*. Such a fluid sense of an appropriate or propitious duration - a tide, a moment, a season - is apposite in several instances when John uses the term ὥρα, as for example at vv. 2.4 and 7.30.

41. τὸν Μεσσίαν. The Messiah. Following Wycliffe and Tyndale, I have transliterated as Messiah (ASV has Messiam) rather than the more usual Messiah, given how the term Messiah is now commonly used in a non-Christian way. As John Chrysostom noted in his commentary on this verse (Migne Patrologia Graeca 59, Homily XIX), the use here of the



definite article by the Evangelist seems deliberate: with Jesus described as *The* Messiah, rather than a messias.

42. ὁ ἐρμηνεύεται Πέτρος. I have transliterated Πέτρος - rather than translate as 'Rock' - and for ἐρμηνεύω (the etymon of the relatively modern, c.1670's, term hermeneutic) have chosen 'explain' to compliment the previous use of μεθερμηνεύω, 'interpretation'.

44. ἐκ τῆς πόλεως Ἀνδρέου καὶ Πέτρου. While πόλις here is invariably translated as 'city' that English word is misleading given (i) the modern connotations of the term city, and (ii) with Bethsaida being described by Mark (8.22-23) - ἔξω τῆς κώμης - as a village, and (iii) that some archaeological evidence points to Bethsaida being et-Tell, which in New Testament times was a small fishing settlement beside the Sea of Galilee. Thus, I incline toward the view that πόλις here is best translated as 'community', qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 22 and 28. [8]

51.

a) ὄψεσθε τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀνεωγμένον. Conventionally, "you will see [the] heaven[s] open" although as noted in the comment on 1.32 the term 'heaven' now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός. While, as at 1.32, Empyrean is suitable, the context suggests the ordinary meaning of "the sky", thus avoiding the colloquial "you will see the heavens open."

b) τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ. Conventionally, "the angels of God," but as seems apparent from the use by the Evangelist of expressions such as ἐρμηνεύω and μεθερμηνεύω - explaining and interpreting unusual (for Greek speakers) words such as Rabbi - those hearing or reading this particular gospel for the first time would have been familiar with ἄγγελος as an 'envoy' or as a 'messenger', not as an "angel" and certainly not as a being of the type described by later Christian iconography. Because of this, I incline toward the view that the English word 'angel' is unsuitable as a translation here leading as it does to retrospective reinterpretation of the text. Hence, "those envoys of Theos."

c) τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Is it possible to interpret this in English without defaulting to the masculine singular thus avoiding the conventional appellation *the Son of Man*, and thus providing 'gender inclusive' alternatives? In the case of υἱός this could be 'descendant' - or the later second/third century (CE) 'child' - although ἀνθρώπου is more problematic. For example the Oxford Inclusive version [9] has, for the Son of Man, "the Human One" which rather distorts the meaning of the Greek, missing at it does the reference to υἱός, while the inclusive terms 'human' and 'human being' combined with υἱός as child impart a particular meaning - the human child, child of human beings - which particular meaning does not readily convey the theological and Biblical resonances of the terms Son of Man/Son of Mankind.

Hence my choice of "the son of a mortal" - of a mortal (singular), not of *mortals* (plural) - which not only resonates with the narrative of the Virgin Birth but also provides a necessary contrast with expressions such as Ἀληθῶς θεοῦ υἱὸς ἦν οὗτος (in truth, this was the Son of Theos) in Matthew 27.54. Hence, Jesus as being a son born of one particular mortal and also being the son of an immortal, a mortal descendant of Theos/God who as a mortal suffers and dies, and yet who, as the Son of Theos, arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven.

ooo

## Chapter Two

4.

a) τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί, γύναι. This has been somewhat misunderstood in two respects. Firstly, the rather colloquial Greek phrase τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί occurs in Epictetus (Discourses, Book II, 19) and means "what is this between you and me?" That is, what has this to do with us? [10] Secondly, to translate γύναι here as "woman" is misleading, giving the impression as it does of a rebuke. However, correctly understood in its cultural context, it is a polite honorific in the same way that the modern expression "ladies and gentlemen" is a polite form of address. The phrase in Epictetus is followed by ἄνθρωπε; here, the phrase is followed by γύναι, with the former approximating to "friend, fellow, sir" and the latter to "friend, my lady, wife" with 'wife' being, in such a cultural context, an expression of familial inclusion, or of friendship, or of politeness, and thus not restricted to one's partner by marriage, a fact expressed by the ASV version of this passage: *la wif, hwæt ys me & þe*, a literal translation of which is "Wife, what's this to me and thee?"

b) οὕτω ἦκει ἡ ὥρα μου. The sense of ὥρα here is 'season'. Which season is that of 'the signs' (σημεῖα), of the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension.

8. ἀρχιτρίκλινος. Literally, 'the authority at the feast'. The English term 'master of ceremonies' suitably suggests the function of this person.

11. ταύτην ἐποίησεν ἀρχὴν τῶν σημείων. The fact that the Evangelist uses the word σημεῖον and not δυνάμεις as in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, is notable and thus should be reflected in the translation, with σημεῖον a 'sign', an 'indication', or an 'omen', and with δύναμις literally implying 'force', 'power', 'authority', and which has generally - in respect of the other Gospels - been translated as 'miracle' (a manifestation of divine power).

13. τὸ πάσχα τῶν Ἰουδαίων. As with Ἰουδαία (qv. 1.19) I have retained the meaning of the Greek and thus have here transliterated πάσχα - pascha - rather than translated as 'Passover' especially as (i) the term Passover now has (often modern) connotations not relevant to the milieu of John the Evangelist and his Gospel, and (ii) that the Greek Orthodox Church retains the word πάσχα in respect of Easter, and (iii) there has been some theological debate as to whether the

Christian pascha (that is, Easter) has through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus voided the pascha (and the Temple in Jerusalem) of the type that the Evangelist goes on to describe.

Thus I incline toward the view that the conventional translation here of "the Passover of the Jews" may impose meanings (especially modern meanings) not merited by the original text while a literal translation - "the pascha of the Judaeans" - is open to contextual interpretation, the context here being what John the Evangelist narrates in his Gospel about the signs (σημεῖα) and about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This literal sense is retained in the Latin version of the verse: et prope erat pascha iudaeorum et ascendit Hierosolyma Iesus.

As to whether the juxtaposition of κατέβη and ἀνέβη - 'went down', to Capernaum and 'went up', to Jerusalem - in verses 12 and 13 - have any significance is moot, with some suggesting that it is meant literally since Jerusalem was at a higher elevation in relation to Capernaum; others that it is metaphorical given that Jerusalem was the capital of Judea and the site of the Temple; while others, such as Thomas Aquinas, compared it to Ephesians IV, 10, and thus considered it in theological terms as a 'descending' and then an 'ascending', with Aquinas writing:

"Sed non vacat a mysterio, quod in Capharnaum descendit, et postmodum Ierosolymam ascendit. Nisi enim descendisset primum, non competisset ei ascendere: quia, ut dicitur Eph. IV, 10, qui descendit, ipse est et qui ascendit." *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, caput II, Lectio 1

That he descended to Capernaum and then ascended to Jerusalem is not without its mystery since if he did not first descend he would not have been able to then ascend, for as has been related (Eph. IV, 10) "The one who descended is the same as the one who ascended." [11]

22. καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς.

a) The consensus is that γραφῇ here - as throughout the New Testament - has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* - 'what was written', writing, inscription - with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [12] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφῇ: writing, something written, an inscription. [13]

Considering what has been mentioned regarding how the Evangelist explained and interpreted certain non-Greek words (qv. the comment on 1.42) and considering also his use of a colloquial Greek expression (qv. the comment on 1.51) it seems probable that the Evangelist is using the word γραφῇ in its usual sense, and that it was only much later that the Greek word, and the Latin *scripturae*, were interpreted to mean 'Scripture' in the 14th century sense of the English word.

Thus I have retained here the ordinary meaning of the Greek, with the reference to the Old Testament being implied by the phrase "trusted what was written."

b) The use here of the singular - τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς, 'the word (logos) that Jesus had spoken' - is notable, and occurs several times in this Gospel in relation to Jesus, as for example at 5.24, 14.23, and 15.3.

23. ἐν τῷ πάσχα ἐν τῇ ἑορτῇ. The sense of the Greek is "at pascha on the feast-day." Interestingly, for πάσχα here the ASV has *eastron* - Ða he wæs on ierusalem on eastron on freols-daige; Wycliffe has *pask* - And whanne Jhesus was at Jerusalem in pask, in the feeste dai - and Tyndale has *ester*, "When he was at Ierusalem at ester in the feaste".

24. γινώσκειν πάντας. That is, as the Evangelist goes on to explain, he apprehended - he understood - the motivations, the character, of those who trusted him because he aware of, he knew, the person within.

ooo

### Chapter Three

1. ἄρχων τῶν Ἰουδαίων. In reference to Nicodemus, this can be, and has been, interpreted in several ways. As referring to "an Elder," to "a leader," to "a ruler," as well as to "a prince" (cf. 16.11, ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου, "Prince of this world," in reference to τοῦ διαβόλου, the Devil). Given Mark 8.31 - τῶν πρεσβυτέρων καὶ τῶν ἀρχιερέων καὶ τῶν γραμματέων - I have opted for "a leader of the Judaeans."

2. οὗτος ἦλθεν πρὸς αὐτὸν νυκτὸς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ. While many translations refer to Jesus here - as does the KJV, "the same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him" - he is not named in the Greek verse, which verse together with the proceeding one might colloquially be translated as "Now there was a man of the Pharisees, Nicodemus by name, a leader of the Judaeans. The same it was who arrived at night and said to he himself..."

3. γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν. The question that Nicodemus goes on to ask - πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρων ὢν - suggests the sense of ἄνωθεν here: 'anew', rather than 'from above.'

4. τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς. Although this literally means "the cavity of the mother" it is most often translated as "the womb of the mother" although the ASV has, instead of 'cavity', 'innoðe' - the 'inside' of the body - and Tyndale simply has 'body' (hys moders body). For the sake of clarity, I have chosen 'womb' here.

5. ὕδατος καὶ πνεύματος. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as 'the Spiritus' - rather than the conventional 'the Spirit' - qv. the

comment on 1.32. Also, I have translated literally - ἐκ τῆς σαρκὸς, of the flesh; and ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος, of the Spiritus - thus preserving the definite article, something sometimes lost in translation, although preserved in both Tyndale and the KJV.

8. δεῖ ὑμᾶς γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν. The plural 'you' is meant here: 'it is needful for you all [for everyone] to be born anew.'

10. σὺ εἶ ὁ διδάσκαλος τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. Given the use here of the definite article, διδάσκαλος suggests something more than just 'teacher' - cf. 3.2 - and I have therefore opted to use the Latin term Magister, implying as it does a particular and high official status, rather than use the literal "the teacher of Israel".

Given the definite article, it is debatable as to whether the Evangelist here wants to convey that Jesus is using the appellation ὁ διδάσκαλος politely or as a rebuke, although I incline toward the view that it is meant politely. Whatever the intent, the effect is that Nicodemus stays silent either because of being rebuked or because he realizes that despite being known as a Magister he really does not know everything. That the Evangelist later on describes Nicodemus trying to ensure a fair trial for Jesus (7.50f) and assisting in the burial of Jesus (19.39ff) might indicate the latter.

In addition, in order to suggest something about the use here of the conjunctive (which allows for several interpretations of the interrogative) I have avoided the English 'and' and used dashes, thus placing the emphasis on whether or not Nicodemus is aware or unaware of such matters as Jesus has mentioned.

12.

a) οὐ πιστεύετε. As at 1.7, 2.11, and 2.24, the personal context suggests 'trust' rather than 'believe'. Here, 'trust' emphasises the person, the character, of Jesus, while 'belief' can convey a belief in something abstract, impersonal, such as a dogma or some particular interpretation of some faith.

b) τὰ ἐπουράνια πιστεύετε. As noted in the comment on 1.32, I have translated οὐρανός not by the conventional English word 'heaven' but by Empyrean. Similarly, for ἐπουράνιος here I have avoided the word 'heavenly' (with all its connotations, ancient, modern, and colloquial) and chosen 'caelestien', a 14th century variant spelling of the post-classical Latin 'caelestianus' which derives from the classical Latin caelestia (celestial).

The effect here of using 'caelestien', as with the use of words such as 'numen' and transliterations such as Theos and phaos, is to suggest the ancient milieu of those who were reading or who were listening to this Gospel in the early years of Christianity, centuries before now common words such as 'heaven', grace, God, and Light had acquired particular theological meanings and an associated iconography.

13. ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. Reading the addition ὁ ὢν ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ with the Textus Receptus and Tischendorf, and which addition is followed by the ASV, Wycliffe, Tyndale, and the KJV.

In respect of "the son of a mortal" for ὁ υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, qv. the comment on 1.51.

19-20. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. For their deeds were harmful; that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

21. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

24. βεβλημένος εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν. A phrase deserving some consideration, for φυλακή is not 'prison' as prisons are understood today and in the past few centuries but rather 'a guarded cage', with βεβλημένος εἰς implying a forceful 'throwing' or a hurling into such a cage.

25. περὶ καθαρισμοῦ. *about the cleansing*. The term 'the cleansing' refers to the traditional ritual purification undertaken by Judaeans.

29. Here, as at 2.9, I have translated νυμφίος by the older (and gender neutral) English term 'spouse' rather than by the now common - rather overused - term bridegroom. In regard to νύμφη I have likewise avoided 'bride' and chosen espousess which - as with espouse - is a variant spelling of espousee, a 14th century term used by Wycliffe and contemporaries, and which term seems apposite here since from the 12th to the 14th centuries it also had a specific religious connotation, being used (as with spouse) in a gender neutral way in reference to those who were devoted to Jesus, although it later came to refer only to those women, such as nuns, who devoted their lives to Jesus.

33. The phrase "certifies by their seal" expresses the literal meaning of ἐσφράγισεν here. Similarly, the meaning of ἀληθής here is well-expressed by the Old English term *soothfast* - trustworthy, steadfast - and which term is used in

this verse in the ASV (god ys soðfestnysse) and in the translation by Wycliffe, with *soothe*, and various other derivatives, also used in the Lindisfarne Gospels.

36. οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν. There are two ways of understanding the literal 'shall not see life' depending on how ὄράω is understood in context: as a reference to life everlasting (will not see life everlasting) or as will not perceive, apprehend, understand, take heed of life (for the opportunity it is).

ooo

## Chapter Four

1. Ὡς οὖν ἔγνω ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The Textus Receptus, and Westcott and Hort, have κύριος (Lord, Master) instead of Ἰησοῦς.

4. Ἦδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχασθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας. The Evangelist states that it was necessary (δεῖ) for Jesus to walk through Samaria which given what follows (vv.9-10) suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans - as is apparent from the Gospel - shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general - with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things - arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' - better than Samaritans - with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans - an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" - exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should (qv. my comment on 2.13) be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

6. ὥρα ἦν ὥς ἕκτη. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' rather than 'hour' qv. the comment on 1.39. As noted there, there are two means of reckoning the durations, with this sixth duration thus being either around the middle of the day (reckoned from the time of sunrise at the location) or early evening.

7.

a) Ἔρχεται γυνὴ ἐκ τῆς Σαμαρείας. Given that the English word Samaritan now has meanings which are not relevant to the text here I have opted to use the term Samaritans - rather than Samaritans - to describe the people of Samaria. Hence here the phrase a 'Samaritan woman' rather than a 'Samaritan woman'.

b) δός μοι πεῖν. I take the sense of δίδωμι here to be the more polite 'grant' rather than 'give'. Combined with πεῖν - to drink - this (grant me to drink) imparts a somewhat different tone than the conventional "give me a drink."

9. πῶς σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν. This is interesting for three reasons. Firstly, the use of πῶς, 'how' (by what means). Secondly the statement σὺ Ἰουδαῖος ὢν, 'you being Judaeans'. Thirdly the repetition of πεῖν.

The Evangelist then explains the reason for her asking 'how can' Jesus accept water from her: because Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things. Which leaves unexplained why the woman - who as the Evangelist goes on to explain has a similar religious heritage to Jesus of Galilee - considers him as being from Judaea.

10.

a) εἰ ἦδεις τὴν δωρεὰν τοῦ θεοῦ. The ASV has *Gif þu wistes godes gyfe*, with 'wistes' - wistist, in Wycliffe - well-expressing in English the sense of ἦδεις here: "if you were witan to the gift of Theos," or more colloquially "if you were wise to the gift of Theos."

b) ὕδωρ ζῶν. Here, ὕδωρ ζῶν, 'living water' - that is, the water of life, ὕδωρ ζωῆς - has both a metaphysical and a literal meaning. The literal meaning of fresh, clean, water is evident from the reply of the Samaritan woman: οὐτε ἄντλημα ἔχεις, you have nothing to haul-out [water] with. The metaphysical meaning is explained by the Evangelist in the verses which follow: the living water is the gift of Halig Spiritus (the Holy Spirit) and which gift is eternal life.

20. οἱ πατέρες ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ ὅρει τούτῳ προσεκύνησαν. Given that there is no context - no mention of the form or type of 'worship' - the term 'reverence' seems appropriate regarding προσκυνέω, expressing as it does both the lack of detail in the narrative and the ambiguity the Greek can have, from a profound 'reverence' - as in the custom of prostration - to an action of honourable respect - as in bowing or being in awe of or showing admiration for - to a silent or verbal (prayerful) personal or communal veneration. In addition, since the English term 'worship' has, over centuries, acquired many religious connotations - both Christian and otherwise - that are not or may not be relevant here, the term is unsuitable, projecting as it does or can do particular meanings onto the text.

21. γύναι. In respect of the polite form of address - here, 'My lady' - rather than the conventional (rather strident)

'woman', qv. the comment on 2.4.

22. ὅτι ἡ σωτηρία ἐκ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἐστίν. Given (i) that σωτηρία is 'deliverance'; and (ii) that the term 'salvation' has acquired particular meanings through centuries of exegesis, and (ii) that Ἰουδαίων implies Judaeans, the statement is that "deliverance is of - arises from, is because of - the Judaeans." For it is Judaeans who seek to kill Jesus for blasphemy (qv. 10.33) and Judaeans who bring Jesus before Pontious Pilate and insist that he be crucified.

23. ὅτε οἱ ἀληθινοὶ προσκυνηταὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ πατρὶ ἐν πνεύματι καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. In respect of ἀλήθεια as 'sincerity' qv.3.21; hence οἱ ἀληθινοὶ as 'the sincere'. In respect of 'reverencers' - "the sincere reverencers will reverence the Father in spiritus and sincerity" - the English word reverencer dates back to the 16th century and has been regularly used since, denoting as it does a person who shows reverence toward someone or toward something deserving of reverence, qv. 4.20.

As to whether spiritus here is Spiritus as in 1.31-2 (the Halig Spiritus, Halgum Gaste, Holy Ghost, Holy Spirit) or refers to an interior 'spiritual' reverence (cf. 3.6) has been much discussed, with the consensus being that it refers to Halig Spiritus.

24. πνεῦμα ὁ θεός. This can be read "Theos: Spiritus," and - like θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος in v.1 - lead to some theological controversy in the 4th and 5th centuries CE concerning the nature of Theos/God and the nature of Spiritus/The Holy Spirit, for here, as with θεὸς in v.1, πνεῦμα lacks the definite article while in v.1 λόγος does not.

26. Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ὁ λαλῶν σοι. The first part - Ἐγὼ εἰμὶ - literally means "I am." Most translations insert 'he' - "I am he" - which rather lessens the impact of what Jesus says, which is that he just "is", beyond causality itself and thus beyond any manifestation of Being - on Earth - as "a being", be such a being the mortal Messiah or some other mortal. Expressed less philosophically, Jesus says that it is the divinity who is speaking to her: "it is *I AM* who is speaking to you." Cf. 8.24.

34. ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον. Given (i) θέλημα not as 'will' but rather as 'design' in the sense of 'a plan' that someone can bring to fruition - qv. 1.13 - and (ii) that ποιέω can imply make, produce, construct, and (iii) the following ἔργον, then this suggests the more evocative "undertake the design of [the one] having sent me and accomplish His work."

35. τετράμηνος. Not 'of or lasting four months' but 'of four moons' (four new moons). The word 'month' - with its modern implications of a particular number of days and of there being twelve months in a year - imposes meanings on the text that are not relevant to life in ancient times in a rather remote Roman province during the reign of Tiberius.

I read ἤδη as part of v.35 and not as the beginning of v.36.

36. εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Here, while the English words 'for' or 'unto' for εἰς are not entirely satisfactory - since the sense is of *for* the purpose of entering into life everlasting - I can find no suitable alternatives.

37. ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ ὁ λόγος ἐστὶν ἀληθινός. The context suggests the meaning of ἀληθινός here. In this [matter] - ἐν γὰρ τούτῳ - of sowing and reaping Jesus says that one person has sown the crop and another person has reaped that crop, which as an objective statement of fact is not always 'true' since the same person can sow a crop and also later on reap the crop they had sown. Thus ἀληθινός here does not suggest 'true' in an objective way but 'real, genuine, trustworthy' - cf. Aristotle, Eudemian Ethics, Book VII, 1236b, ἀληθινὸς φίλος, a 'genuine friend'; also Plato, Republic, Book I, 347d, ἀληθινὸς ἄρχων, a trustworthy leader.

That is, in this particular instance the saying is trustworthy, correct; it is relevant. There is therefore no need to suggest, as some commentators have done, that this simple statement of fact is a spiritual maxim concerning the spiritual reality behind outward appearance.

42. ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου. Some MSS - including the Textus Receptus - have ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου ὁ χριστός. It possible that ὁ χριστός - 'the Christ' - was appended because σωτὴρ was an epithet of Zeus (qv. Pindar, Olympian Ode, 5.40, Σωτὴρ ὑπινεφὲς Ζεῦ) and other classical deities and in its Latin form, Servator, was often used in reference to the Roman Emperor and those who had done significant deeds beneficial to Rome or its Empire.

While generally translated in the Gospels as saviour, the classical sense is someone who protects, defends, and preserves; in respect of individuals, someone or some divinity who protects, can defend, them and preserve their life; in respect of communities, someone or some divinity who protects, defends, and maintains the community and thus the status quo, qv. Cicero:

ego tantis periculis propositis cum, si victus essem, interitus rei publicae, si vicissem, infinita dimicatio pararetur, committerem ut idem perditor rei publicae nominarer qui servator fuissem. (For Placinius, 36.89)

Since both 'Saviour' and 'Redeemer', in the almost two thousand years since the Gospel was written - and first read and heard - have acquired particular theological (and especially soteriological) meanings which are not or may not have been relevant all those centuries ago I have chosen to use the Latin term *servator*. This avoids imposing upon the text much later theological/soteriological meanings, iconography, and archetypes; as for example in the following: "est duplex salus: quaedam vera, quaedam non vera. Vera quidem salus, cum liberamur a veris malis, et conservamur in veris bonis." (Thomas Aquinas, *Super Evangelium S. Ioannis lectura*, caput 4, lectio 5)

The term servator also has the benefit of suggesting that the Evangelist, in using the expression ὁ σωτὴρ τοῦ κόσμου, might have been contrasting Jesus - as Servator of The World - with the Roman Emperor as servator of the Roman Empire.

44. ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι. This does not refer to Galilee itself - or to "in his own country" as in the KJV - but rather to "his home village," Nazareth. As to the size of Nazareth during the life of Jesus, and thus as whether it was a town or a village, scholarly opinion - based on the scant archaeological and historical evidence - indicates it was probably a village, not a town, and certainly not a city.

46. τις βασιλικὸς. The 'royal official' belonged to the court of King Herod and the term βασιλικὸς might well have been used by the Evangelist to distinguish this official from a Roman one.

47. ἡρώτα ἵνα καταβῇ. The use of καταβαίνω (descend, come down) is suggestive of topography, with Capernaum a town by the Sea of Galilee and Cana (wherever it was located historically) somewhat higher up, just as Nazareth is above that Sea.

52.

a) ἐν ᾗ κομψότερον ἔσχεν. I have translated literally - eschewing prosaic terms such as 'got better' and 'began' - in order to try and convey the meaning of the Greek, of a royal official using a precise expression: κομψότερον ἔσχεν, which implies a sudden 'betterment', a remarkable recovery, rather than 'began to get better.'

b) Ἐχθὲς ὥραν ἐβδόμην. In respect of ὥρα as 'duration' qv. 1.39. As noted there regarding determining durations, the 'sixth duration' mentioned here could be either early afternoon or early evening.

54. The exact meaning of the beginning here - of the final verse of chapter 4 - is difficult to deduce since the Greek text - τοῦτο πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον, in the Textus Receptus - even when amended to τοῦτο [δὲ] πάλιν δεύτερον σημεῖον is rather obscure. However the general sense seems clear, with the Evangelist narrating either that Jesus did two signs - 'miracles' - in Galilee after he left Judea for Galilee by way of Samaria with one of them being the healing of the son of royal official, or that the two signs in Galilee are the previous one at Cana (water into wine) and the healing of the son of royal official. I incline toward the former, hence: "that was the second sign that Jesus brought about when he arrived in Galilee from Judea."

ooo

## Chapter Five

2.

*the place of the sheep.* Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

*named in the language of the Hebrews.* ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

3.

*the infirm.* The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

*awaiting a change in the water.* Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

4. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγίης ἐγίνετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. Although the verse is omitted in NA28, and generally regarded as an interpolation, I include it since it is in ASV, Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV, and Douay-Rheims.

a) *envoy.* As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos.* Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English both as a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or deity.

c) *became complete*. ὕγιής ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

8. *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

9. *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὕγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

10. *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

14. *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

16. *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

18. *annulled the Sabbath*. ἔλυνεν τὸ σάββατον. They were more determined to kill Jesus not because he himself had 'broken' the Sabbath but because they believed he had publicly 'annulled' (λύω) the Sabbath by telling someone to do what the Judeans regarded as impermissible, and thus, by now equating himself to Theos, seemed desirous of replacing their Judaeian laws with new laws of his own.

19. *on his own*. ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ. Literally, of/from himself. The verse itself is evocative of a human son learning by observing what his father does.

21. *awakens*. Given the following ζωοποιέω - 'make alive, give life' - I am inclined to take the general sense of ἐγείρω - 'wake' - rather than the specific 'raise up' and which "raising up of the dead" now implies certain post-Hellenic iconographies.

22. *For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son*. οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The preceding θέλει and the context suggest κρίνω as 'choose' not 'judge', and which interpretation imparts a somewhat different meaning from the conventional one which involves Jesus giving life to 'whomsoever he wishes' and judging them; and a different meaning given how the term 'judgement' has for over two thousand years been interpreted in relation to the Old and the New Testaments.

Instead of such later interpretations, the Evangelist describes how Jesus simply gives life by design because his father - Theos - has given the task of choosing to his son. Which is why Jesus previously said (4:34)

Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον

My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

Thus here Jesus is affirming that he is indeed annulling the laws of the old covenant: it is he who now chooses who has life everlasting. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:39, 2 Kings 5:7, et seq.

24. *not entered into the choosing*. εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται. Literally, "does not go to Choosing" - in conventional terms, does not go into judgement - because having heard, and trusted the father through the son, they already have the gift of life everlasting and thus pass straight from death to that new life.

25. *shall hear ... have listened*. ἀκούσουσιν ... ἀκούσαντες. The literal "shall hear" and "that hear" does not clearly express what is meant.

27. *and also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing*. καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Literally, "and he gifted him with authority to undertake choosing because he is the son of a mortal." Which explains the following μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, "be not astonished at this". In regard to υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as 'son of a mortal' instead of Son of Man, qv. the comment on 1:51. Also, cf. 9:35, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which makes perfect sense if Jesus is asking "Do you trust the son of a mortal?" but is somewhat problematic if conventionally interpreted as "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

28. *burial places*. While the choice in respect of μνημεῖον seems to be between the literal 'monument', and tomb or grave, a most suitable alternative - cf. ASV (byrgenum) and Wycliffe (in buriels) - is 'burial places'.

29.

a) *those that have acted honourably*. οἱ τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιήσαντες. In various essays - such as *Cicero On Summum Bonum* [14] - and in my commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, I have explained my reasons for interpreting ἀγαθός not as some posited, abstract, 'good' but classically as, according to context, nobility, noble, honourable. This is apposite here given the emphasis on personal deeds, on what a person had done (ποιήσαντες) or not done. Cf. the



following from the Corpus Aristotelicum:

τῆς δὲ φρονήσεώς ἐστι τὸ βουλευσασθαι, τὸ κρίναι τὰ ἀγαθὰ καὶ τὰ κακὰ καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ αἰρετὰ καὶ φευκτά, τὸ χρῆσθαι πᾶσι καλῶς τοῖς ὑπάρχουσιν ἀγαθοῖς, τὸ ὁμιλῆσαι ὀρθῶς [De Virtutibus et Vitiis Libellus 1250a]

It is part of wisdom to accept advice, to distinguish the honourable, the dishonourable, and all that is, in life, acceptable or to be avoided; to fairly use all resources; to be genuine in company.

b) *anastasis*. ἀνάστασις. A transliteration since the term 'resurrection' has, since it was first used in the 14th century, acquired various religious, doctrinal, and other associations (such as, in relation to Jesus, the resurrection of the physical body) and which associations may or may not be relevant here. In context, anastasis might refer here (contra Irenaeus) to a non-corporeal elevation or re-birth, and thus to the ψυχή - the spirit or soul - of those mortals who have been gifted with life everlasting proceeding to a place such as Empyrean.

c) *dishonourably*. The sense of φαῦλος is not some posited, abstract, impersonal, 'evil' but of personal deeds that are 'base', mean, and thus ignoble, dishonourable, and hence revealing of a rotten personal character, of a bad physis. Qv. πονηρός and φαῦλος at 3:19-20.

d) *to anastasis of the choosing*. εἰς ἀνάστασιν κρίσεως. Literally, 'to anastasis of choosing'. They - or their ψυχή - proceed forth from their place of burial to where Jesus chooses whether or not to gift them with life everlasting.

30. *I am not able to do anything on my own*. Qv. 5:19

33.

a) *you inquired after John*. ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλκατε πρὸς Ἰωάννην. Literally, "you dispatched unto John," referring to 1:19, the priests and Levites dispatched from Jerusalem.

b) *and he was evidential to the veritas*. καὶ μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. That is, he attested - gave evidence concerning - the veritas. Regarding veritas, qv. the comment on πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, 1:14.

35.

a) *lantern*. λύχνος. The term 'lamp' is inappropriate given its modern connotations.

b) *firefull and revealing*. καίόμενος καὶ φαίνων. I take this metaphorically - the burning fire of the lantern shines a bright revealing light - rather than the literal "burning and bright".

c) In regard to *phaos*, qv. 1:4-5. Cf. Poemandres, 32, ζῶν καὶ φῶς; Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, I:2, τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα.

36. *beyond that of John*. μείζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου. Not the rather strident 'greater than' - with its implication of 'better than' - but the comparative 'beyond that' as in an elder or someone fully-grown who is years beyond the age of someone younger, qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 358,

ὥς μήτε μέγαν μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι μέγα δουλείας γάγγαμον ἄτης παναλώτου

Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl. [15]

37. *whose likeness you have never observed*. οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐώρακατε. An interesting question of interpretation here is the meaning of εἶδος. Whether to translate as 'form' - with a possible implied reference to Plato's 'theory of forms' - or as the literal 'shape' or 'appearance'. Given the context - and 6:46, οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα - I take the literal meaning; hence *likeness*, as in Wycliffe.

39. *you search the writings*. ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς. Qv. 2:22 regarding γραφῇ not as the post-Hellenic exegetical 'scripture' but as having the usual Hellenistic meaning of 'that which is written', a writing. The ASV has Smeageað halige gewritu.

41. *I do not receive honours from people*. Δόξαν παρὰ ἀνθρώπων οὐ λαμβάνω. Regarding δόξα in respect of the supra-personal, qv. the comment on 1:14. Here, the human context implies receiving honour - praise, renown, a good reputation, a title or titles - from others and thus being regarded by people as an illustrious person: being 'glorified' by them on the basis of such human given honours.

44. *from Theos alone*. Reading παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ μόνου. NA28 has παρὰ τοῦ μόνου θεοῦ. There are two ways of interpreting the Greek of NA28: (i) that genuine honour is only from Theos, and thus that they do not seek such honour as is "only from Theos", or (ii) that they do not seek the honour that is from "the [one and] only Theos."

While the latter imposes a strictly grammatical interpretation on the text, such a restrictive interpretation does not in my view suit the context at all, which is of worldly honours in contrast to the (genuine) honour which Theos bestows. Jesus has emphasized that he has been sent by the father, that the father is his witness, that he does not receive honours from people, and goes on to say that Moses wrote about him. There seems no need to mention that his father is "the only Theos", given the Judaeans would assuredly know that "the father" meant their "one and only god" and



that Moses spoke and wrote of "the one God". Cf. John 17:3, τὸν μόνον ἀληθινὸν θεὸν and phrases such as ὁ μόνος θεός and ὁ θεὸς μόνος in the Old Testament. [16]

An interesting alternative Byzantine reading (Codex Petropolitanus Purpureus) is τοῦ μονογενοῦς θεοῦ, cf. 1:18, μονογενῆς θεός.

---

### Footnotes

[1] Measure for Measure. Act One, Scene One, v. 32

[2] Romans 13.10

[3] King James version, following Tyndale.

[4] 1.21 (Ποιμάνδρης)

[5] φαίνω as a revealing is much in evidence in classical Greek literature, often in relation to theos. For example:

ἤτέομεν δὲ θεὸν φῆναι τέρας: αὐτὰρ ὃ γ' ἡμῖν  
δεῖξε, καὶ ἠνώγει πέλαγος μέσον εἰς Εὐβοίαν  
τέμνειν, ὄφρα τάχιστα ὑπὲκ κακότητα φύγοιμεν.

About this we asked the god to reveal to us a sign  
And he exhorted us to cut through the middle of the sea to Euboea  
In order to swiftly pass that bad luck by.

The Odyssey, Book 3, 173-5

[6] As noted in the Appendix - *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John* - in respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former - entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας - should be 'Judaean Antiquities', while the latter - entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου - should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

#### Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους - Romaeans - implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judeans came about."

#### Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is

"Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἄκοῦ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις - understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement - town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

#### Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish - although LSJ provide no sources, with the English word 'Jew' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE - the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

[7] Thomas Wright. *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*. Second edition, London, 1884. pp.72, 156, 316.

[8]

ὄρᾳς μὲν ἡμᾶς ἡλίκοι προσήμεθα  
βωμοῖσι τοῖς σοῖς: οἱ μὲν οὐδέπω μακρὰν  
πτέσθαι σθένοντες, οἱ δὲ σὺν γήρᾳ βαρεῖς,  
ἱερῆς, ἐγὼ μὲν Ζηνός, οἶδε τ' ἡθέων  
λεκτοί: τὸ δ' ἄλλο φύλον ἐξεστεμμένον  
20 ἀγοραῖσι θακεῖ πρὸς τε Παλλάδος διπλοῖς  
ναοῖς, ἐπ' Ἰσμηνοῦ τε μαντεῖα σποδῶ.  
πόλις γάρ, ὥσπερ καὶ τὸς εἰσορᾷς, ἄγαν  
ἤδη σαλεύει κἀνακουφίσαι κάρᾳ  
βυθῶν ἔτ' οὐχ οἷα τε φοινίου σάλου,  
25 φθίνουσα μὲν κάλυξιν ἐγκάρποις χθονός,  
φθίνουσα δ' ἀγέλαις βουνόμοις τόκοισί τε  
ἀγόνοις γυναικῶν: ἐν δ' ὁ πυρφόρος θεὸς  
σκήψας ἐλαύνει, λοιμὸς ἔχθιστος, πόλιν,  
ὕφ' οὗ κενοῦται δῶμα Καδμεῖον, μέλας δ'  
Ἄιδης στεναγμοῖς καὶ γόοις πλουτίζεται.

You see how many sit here  
Before your altars - some not yet robust enough  
To fly far; some heavy as I, Priest of Zeus, with age;  
And these, chosen from our unmarried youth.  
Enwreathed like them, our people sit in the place of markets,  
By the twin shrines of Pallas  
And by the embers of the Ismenian oracle.  
Our community, as you yourself behold, already heaves  
Too much - its head bent  
To the depths bloodily heaving.  
Decay is in the unfruitful seeds in the soil,  
Decay is in our herds of cattle - our women  
Are barren or abort, and that god of fever  
Swoops down to strike our community with an odious plague,  
Emptying the abode of Cadmus and giving dark Hades  
An abundance of wailing and lamentation.

[9] *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

[10] The Discourses of Epictetus were compiled (by Arrian) some decades before the Gospel of John was written (which according to scholarly consensus was around or shortly after 90 CE). Given that both Epictetus and Arrian were native Greek speakers, the use of such a colloquial Greek phrase by the Evangelist perhaps indicates something not only about John himself but also about the audience and the readers who first heard or read his Gospel.

[11] For context, the Greek of the complete verse of Ephesians is: ὁ καταβὰς αὐτός ἐστιν καὶ ὁ ἀναβὰς ὑπεράνω πάντων τῶν οὐρανῶν ἵνα πληρώσῃ τὰ πάντα. Literally, "The one having descended is the same as the one who, having ascended high above all the heavens, completes everything."

[12] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli

eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[13] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

[14] In *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* Marcus Tullius Cicero, in criticizing Epicurus and others, presents his view of Summum Bonum, a term normally translated as 'the supreme good'. According to Cicero, honestum (honourable conduct) is the foundation of Summum Bonum which itself can be discerned by careful consideration (ratio) in conjunction with that knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal that has been described as wisdom (sapientia),

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. (II, 37)

He then writes that honestum does not depend on any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected but instead can be discerned by means of consensus among the whole community in combination with the example afforded by the honourable actions and motives of the finest of individuals:

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

In effect, Summum Bonum – what the Greeks termed τὸ ἀγαθὸν – depends on certain personal qualities such as a careful consideration of a matter; on a personal knowing of what is divine and what is mortal; on the example of personal noble deeds and motives, and on a communal consensus.

There is therefore nothing morally abstract or dogmatic about Cicero's understanding of Summum Bonum which so well expresses the Greco-Roman view, as does Seneca:

summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt. *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4

Thus, perhaps a more apt translation of the term Summum Bonum would be *the highest nobility*.

[15] In context, the quotation from Aeschylus is:

ὦ Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ καὶ νύξ φιλία  
μεγάλων κόσμων κτεάτειρα,  
ἥτ' ἐπὶ Τροίας πύργοις ἔβαλες  
στεγανὸν δίκτυον, ὥς μήτε μέγαν  
μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι  
360μέγα δουλείας  
γάγγαμον, ἅτης παναλώτου

You, Zeus our Chief, and Nox, our companion -  
Mistress of the mighty cosmos  
Who cast over the Trojan towers a covering net  
Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits  
Of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl.

[16] In respect of the article, τοῦ, here and the phrase ὁ μόνος θεός, cf. Philo, *De Profugis*, 71-72,

τοῦ μὲν γὰρ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀνθρώπου, ὃς δὴ νοῦς ἐστὶ καθαρώτατος, εἷς ὁ μόνος θεὸς δημιουργός, τοῦ δὲ λεγομένου καὶ κεκραμένου μετ' αἰσθήσεως τὸ πλῆθος. οὗ χάριν ὁ μὲν κατ' ἐξοχὴν ἄνθρωπος σὺν τῷ ἄρθρῳ μεμνήνυται λέγεται γάρ· ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, τὸν αἰδῆ καὶ ἄκρατον ἐκεῖνον λογισμόν, ὃ δὲ ἄνευ τῆς τοῦδε προσθήκης· τὸ γὰρ ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον ἐμφαίνει τὸν ἐξ ἀλόγου καὶ λογικῆς συνυφανθέντα φύσεως.

## ΕΠΙΛΟΓΟΣ

### A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὕρηκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messias).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινὴ) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [a] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἁμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develop a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἁμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

David Myatt  
2017

[a] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

---

## Appendix

### A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose – perhaps controversially – to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyy/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, ἄφωσθη ἡ Ἰουδαία, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

ooo

In respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeian Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίων – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

#### Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθερμηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning 'the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament'. However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

## Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

## Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeans, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὕφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

---

## Bibliography & Abbreviations

**ASV.** The Anglo-Saxon version of the Gospels, otherwise known as the Wessex Gospels, c. 990 CE.

Bright, William. *The Gospel Of John. In West-Saxon.* Heath & Co., London. 1906.

Thorpe, Benjamin. *The Anglo-Saxon Version of the Holy Gospels.* Third Edition. Putnum, New York. 1851.

**KJV.** The 1611 CE version of the Bible otherwise known as the King James Bible.

**LSJ.** The Greek-English Lexicon edited by H. G. Liddell, R. Scott and H. S. Jones. 9th edition, Oxford University Press, 1996.

**NA28.** Nestle-Aland. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012

**Tyndale.** The version of the Bible translated by William Tyndale. 1526 CE.

Daniell, D (editor). *The New Testament. 1526 Edition*. Facsimile. The British Library, 2008.

**Wycliffe.** The version of the Bible attributed to John Wycliffe. 1389 CE.

Forshall, J & Madden, F (editors). *The Holy Bible. Containing The Old And New Testaments, With The Apocryphal Books, In The Earliest English Versions Made From The Latin Vulgate By John Wycliffe And His Followers*. Four volumes. Oxford University Press, 1850.

---

Second Edition  
All translations by DW Myatt

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license  
and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

---

## The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth

### A Question Of Hermeneutics?

As my translation of and commentary on the *Gospel According To John* so very slowly progresses [1] what I am (re)discovering is how different the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – as presented in and by that particular Gospel over two thousand years ago – seems to me to be from what has so often been preached by so many and for so long regarding that religion which has become known as Christianity, dependant as such preaching so often is and has been on interpretations, and translations, of the Greek texts that form the 'New Testament'.

What emerges from my own translation – that is, from my particular 'interpretation of meaning' of the Gospel According To John – is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John, such as the following two, one of which involves the Greek word πιστεύω, and which word is perhaps a relevant hermeneutical example. The conventional interpretation of meaning, in respect of New Testament texts, is 'believe', 'have faith in', so that John 3:16 is interpreted along the following lines:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (King James Bible)

Similarly in respect of other verses where πιστεύω occurs, so that the impression is of the necessity of believing, of having or acquiring faith.

Yet, and in regard to the aforementioned verse, if one interprets that particular (and another) Greek word in a more Hellenistic – a more Greek – way, then one has:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

Not only is this personal, direct – as in personally trusting someone as opposed to a 'blind believing' – but there are no prior hermeneutic assumptions about 'God', derived as such assumptions are from over two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

#### Example One. Chapter Three, 16-21

DWM:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting. For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him. Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos. [2]

King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

#### Example Two. Chapter Five, 1-16

DWM:

Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem. And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades in which were a large number of the infirm – the blind, the limping, the withered – awaiting a change in the water since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.



And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm. Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk?"

But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete, and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. [3][4]

King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

## Conclusion

The first example seems to me to be revealing of the personal nature of the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – of a personal trust in a particular person, in this instance a trust in Jesus because of how he and his life are recounted by the Evangelist – contrasting with a rather impersonal demand to believe, to have faith, based on doctrine as codified by someone else or by some organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy.

The second example seems to me to be revealing of the contrast between the then organized supra-personal religion of the Judaeans – with its doctrinal forbiddance, sometimes on pain of death, of certain personal deeds – and the empathy and compassion of an individual, as evident in Jesus in the immediacy of the moment healing a long-suffering infirm man and bidding him to take up and carry his bedroll, undoubtedly aware as Jesus was that he was doing and inciting what was forbidden because for him empathy and compassion were more important than some established doctrine.

Is this contrast between what seems to be a particular dogmatism, a particular religious (hubriatic) intolerance by the Judaeans, and an individual being empathic and compassionate in the immediacy of the moment, still relevant today? Personally, I do believe it is, leading me to conclude that τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον – The Gospel According To John – contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous. For, as described in tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum,

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis, for Physis is presenced in the divine. [5]

David Myatt  
October 2017

ooo

### Footnotes

[1] Volume I (chapters 1-5) of my translation of and commentary on the Gospel According To John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

[2] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 3:16-21.

° *Nomos*. νόμος. A transliteration since as with 'logos' a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

° *Phaos*. Given that φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φάος instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωή and θεός and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος (Poemandres, 1.21)

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

° *For their deeds were harmful*. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. Harmful: that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he – as the only begotten son of Theos – knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

° *whomsoever practices disclosure*. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose – who do not hide – who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal – about the character of people – and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing – the opposite of lying and of being deceitful – and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[3] Note how Jesus does not disapprovingly preach about – does not even mention – the apparently superstitious practice of infirm individuals waiting by a 'miraculous' pool in order to be cured.

[4] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 5:1-16.

° *the place of the sheep*. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

° *named in the language of the Hebrews*. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

° *the infirm*. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

° *awaiting a change in the water*. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

° *Envoy of Theos*. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δῆποτε κατειχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. The verse is omitted

by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

a) *envoy*. As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos*. Regarding ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English as both a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or a deity.

c) *became complete*. ὕγιής ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

° *bedroll*. κράβαττος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

° *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὕγιής ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

° *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

° *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction [to Volume I of the translation] regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

° *Judaeans*. Qv. my essay *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John*, available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/07/05/a-note-on-the-term-jews-in-the-gospel-of-john/>

° *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find what they regard is evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[5] *Ἰερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. Included in: David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369

---

All translations by DW Myatt

This work is published under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and republished,  
according to the terms of that license.

---

# The Johannine Weltanschauung

## Preface

In verse 26 of Chapter Four of The Gospel of John (τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον) Jesus, speaking to a Samaritan woman, is recorded as saying: Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ λαλῶν σοι.

The first part - Ἐγώ εἰμι - literally means "I am." Most translations insert 'he' - "I am he" - which in my view seems to somewhat lessen the impact of what Jesus says, which is that he just "is", beyond causality itself and thus beyond any manifestation of Being - on Earth - as "a being", be such a 'being' the mortal Messiah or some other mortal. Expressed less philosophically, Jesus says that it is the divinity who is speaking to her: "it is *I AM* who is speaking to you," which expression is what I, during my short perambulation as a Catholic monk wrote, near the verse in the margin of my copy of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον.

Revisiting such marginalia decades later during my translation of and commentary on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, I began to translate the Gospel itself and which translation and the accompanying commentary <sup>[1]</sup> given the relevance of the Gospel to particular verses in some of those tractates, for example φῶς καὶ ζωὴ ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος (phaos and Life are the theos and the father from whence the human came into being) from the Poemander tractate and ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν (Who was Life and which Life was the Phaos of human beings. And the Phaos illuminates the dark and is not overwhelmed by the dark) from Chapter One of John.

This led to further questions some of which I discuss here.

David Myatt  
Feria sexta in Parasceve  
2024 CE

[1] Volume One: *The Gospel According To John*, Chapter 1 -5, Translation and Commentary, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

## A Rhetorical Question

In my 2017 monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* I asked if:

"a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - be different from, more numinous than, the Christianity derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other texts included in what has become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καινὴ Διαθήκη? A Johannine Christianity where the Greek texts known as LXX, the Old Testament, were not regarded as 'the Word of God' - as divinely inspired and canonical - but rather as providing some historical background to the old, superseded, logos of Mosaic law and of 'the Prophets'. Would such a Johannine Christianity be a Weltanschauung - a particular and individual apprehension or interpretation of Reality - rather than a religion with all that a religion implies in terms of hierarchy and dogma? With the contrast being, in the words of Tertullian, Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aequae ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum." [1]

The origin of such a questioning was threefold: (α) my translation of the Gospel of John, (β) what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus, such as the expression "let us then try what love can do" from William Penn's *Some Fruits of Solitude*, with all three, according to my reading, emphasizing the importance of love; and (γ) what I sometimes felt as a monk in Choir when passages from the Old Testament regarding 'fire, brimstone, vengeance' - which seemed to me to be discordant with love - were chanted as part of Liturgia Horarum or, often as part of a Mass, read out.

Apropos (α) there were several significant passages from that Gospel which inclined me to consider whether the life and the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth annulled the Old Testament both as a guide to understanding and appreciating Theos, the supreme deity, and as a guide to daily life and remembrance through ritual and prayer, with the proviso that my answers were and are just my fallible answers just as my translation, or rather interpretation of meaning, of that Gospel was fallible and neither possessed nor professed any authority.

The first significant passage was from Chapter Five, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [3], with my use in my translation of the term Judaeans, rather than the traditional 'Jews', explained in Appendix One.

18 The Judaeans were even more determined to kill him since not only had he annulled the Sabbath but also because he spoke of Theos as his Father, presenting himself as equal to Theos.

19 In response, Jesus said to them: "Verily, verily, I say unto you that the son is not able to do anything on his

own: only that which he observes his father doing. For whatever the father does, the son also does,  
20 For the father loves the son and reveals to him all that he does. And, beyond this, he will reveal to him greater works which shall astonish you  
21 Since just as the father awakens the dead, and gives life, so also the son gives life by design to whomsoever,  
22 For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son  
23 So that all might honour the son as they honour the father. And whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him.  
24 Verily, verily, I say unto you that whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting and is not entered into the choosing but passes from death into life.  
25 Verily, verily, I say unto you that a season is arriving, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of Theos and those who listen shall live.  
26 Just as the father possesses Life within himself so he gifted the son with Life within him,  
27 And also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing.

Are the following phrases indicative? "He annulled the Sabbath", "for the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son", "whoever does not honour the son, does not honour the father who sent him", "whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting", "gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing".

The second passage was from Chapter Three, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [4],

16 For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.  
17 For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him.  
18 Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.  
19 And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful.  
20 For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed.  
21 But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos.

Of significance here are: "so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting", "their deeds were harmful", "anyone who does what is mean", and "lest their deeds be exposed".

As noted in my commentary [4] this expresses something somewhat different from the conventional translations of this passage such as this from the King James Bible:

God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

There is a personal trust instead of a believing; harmful deeds instead of 'evil' deeds; being mean instead of being 'evil', and being manifest instead of being 'exposed'.

The third passage returns us to Chapter Five, with the Greek text and my commentary on the passage provided in footnote [5]

1 Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem.  
2 And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades  
3 In which were a large number of the infirm - the blind, the limping, the withered - awaiting a change in the water  
4 Since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.  
  
5 And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm.  
6 Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"  
7 The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."  
8 Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

9 And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

10 Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

11 To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

12 So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk around?"

13 But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

14 Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

15 The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete.

16 And thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath.

Again, and as noted in my commentary, [5] this expresses something somewhat different from the conventional translations of this passage such as this also from the King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

There is, most noticeably, Envoy of Theos (ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου) instead of 'angel', 'no more missteps' instead of 'sin no more' and harass (διώκω) instead of 'persecute' with my interpretation of ἁμαρτία as 'error' or 'mistake' or here as 'misstep' rather than 'sin' explained in the Introduction of my translation:

(i) In 8.7 I have eschewed the common translation of ἁμαρτία by English word 'sin' and which English word, through centuries of Christian exegesis and preaching, has become a theological abstraction and a pejorative term, whereas the original meaning of the English word syn imputed the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; of in some way overstepping the bounds or transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus of accepting responsibility for such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

While my translation of 'mistake' (in 8.7) and 'error' (in 1.29) may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, [6] and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Thus the interpretation of this particular verse is "So, as they continued to ask he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake throw the first stone at her."

(ii) In 1.10 - ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾧ καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο - I take the sense of ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ᾧ as suggesting not that "he was in the world" but rather that he was "of the world", among - with - those of the world, with his mortal body subject to pain and bodily death, with καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο thus implying not that "the world was made/created through him" but that the world was presenced in him, past, present, and future, with the English word 'presenced' - etymon: Latin praesentia - suggested by how he came to be embodied, presenced, in the Eucharist (qv. the phrase "This same presence may be called moste fitly, a reall presence, that is a presence not fained, but a true & a faythfull presence," in John Foxe's *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history: contaynyng the Actes and monumentes of thynges passed in every kynges tyme in this realme*, 1570).

## Vexata Quaestio

The question is one of not only the interpretation of particular Hellenistic (κοινή) Greek words, such as ἁμαρτία, which over centuries have acquired various meanings not necessarily germane to the milieu of the author of the Gospel attributed to John, but also the authority of the ancient Church which pronounced what constituted Christian belief and doctrine and thus what was considered to be heresy. Thus, to provide just one example, the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεὸς and the denotatum ὁ θεὸς in the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

In this context my interpretation of John, evident in the above three passages, may well be heretical because it presents both a different Jesus and a different teaching where he annuls not only the Judaeian Sabbath but also the authority of the Old Testament since he is gifted by Theos "with the authority of choosing" with anyone trusting in him having "life everlasting".

Thus, it could be argued that Jesus abrogates the Old Testament because it is no longer needed since "whomsoever hears my Logos, and trusts who sent me, has life everlasting," with the Logos as expounded in the Gospel of John:

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος [Chapter One, v.2]

In primacy was the logos, and the logos was with Theos, and the logos was Theos.

καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός), πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας [Chapter One, v.14]

And the Logos became corporeal and dwelt among us and we perceived his numinosity, the numinosity of the only begotten of the Father, abounding in veritas, benevolence.

Apropos authority and Christianity, and the 'heresy' or unorthodoxy of various interpretations of texts, the schisms, the reformations and divisions, over the past two millennia, my answer derives from one of the the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos: that it is the empathy and the pathei-mathos of individuals which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself. Which, given the personal and the individual nature of empathy and pathei-mathos, implies that it is for us as individuals to decide.

My own pathei-mathos inclines me to favour the message of personal love, of humility, of trying not to repeat our mistakes, of appreciating that there is some-thing, a type of Being, beyond and more powerful than us and whatever we bring-into-being be it an idea, an ideology, a creed, a nation, a State, a jurisprudence, or an Empire. Some of us may name this Being as 'God'; or θεὸς or 'the gods' to which they give personal names. Some may describe it, as many hermeticists do, as The One, The Monas, The Father who is both male and female: ἀρρενόθηλος. [7]

I have discovered this message in the Gospel of John; in the Corpus Hermeticum; in many of the writings of Cicero; in the poetry of Sappho and TS Eliot; in the music of JS Bach; and in many other writings and Cræfts ancient and modern. [8]

---

## Notes

[1] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

[2]

Text:

<sup>18</sup> διὰ τοῦτο οὖν μᾶλλον ἐζήτουν αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι οὐ μόνον ἔλυε τὸ σάββατον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγε τὸν Θεόν, ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ Θεῷ. <sup>19</sup> Ἀπεκρίνατο οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄφ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν, ἐὰν μή τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα· ἃ γὰρ ἂν ἐκεῖνος ποιῇ, ταῦτα καὶ ὁ υἱὸς ὁμοίως ποιεῖ. <sup>20</sup> ὁ γὰρ πατήρ φιλεῖ τὸν υἱόν, καὶ πάντα δείκνυσιν αὐτῷ ἃ αὐτὸς ποιεῖ· καὶ μείζονα τούτων δείξει αὐτῷ ἔργα, ἵνα ὑμεῖς θαυμάζητε. <sup>21</sup> ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἐγείρει τοὺς νεκροὺς καὶ ζωοποιεῖ, οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς οὗς θέλει ζωοποιεῖ. <sup>22</sup> οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκε τῷ υἱῷ. <sup>23</sup> ἵνα πάντες τιμῶσι τὸν υἱόν, καθὼς τιμῶσι τὸν πατέρα. ὁ μὴ τιμῶν τὸν υἱόν, οὐ τιμᾷ τὸν πατέρα τὸν πέμψαντα αὐτόν. <sup>24</sup> ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁ τὸν λόγον μου ἀκούων, καὶ πιστεύων τῷ πέμψαντί με, ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· καὶ εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται, ἀλλὰ μεταβέβηκεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν. <sup>25</sup> ἀμὴν ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι ἔρχεται ὥρα καὶ νῦν ἐστίν, ὅτε οἱ νεκροὶ ἀκούσονται τῆς φωνῆς τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ οἱ ἀκούσαντες ζήσονται. <sup>26</sup> ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ ἔχει ζωὴν ἐν ἑαυτῷ, οὕτως ἔδωκε καὶ τῷ υἱῷ ζωὴν ἔχειν ἐν ἑαυτῷ. <sup>27</sup> καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ καὶ κρίσιν ποιεῖν, ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστί.



### Commentary:

18. *annulled the Sabbath*. ἔλυεν τὸ σάββατον. They were more determined to kill Jesus not because he himself had 'broken' the Sabbath but because they believed he had publicly 'annulled' (λύω) the Sabbath by telling someone to do what the Judeans regarded as impermissible, and thus, by now equating himself to Theos, seemed desirous of replacing their Judaeen laws with new laws of his own.

19. *on his own*. ἑαυτοῦ. Literally, of/from himself. The verse itself is evocative of a human son learning by observing what his father does.

21. *awakens*. Given the following ζωοποιέω - 'make alive, give life' - I am inclined to take the general sense of ἐγείρω - 'wake' - rather than the specific 'raise up' and which "raising up of the dead" now implies certain post-Hellenic iconographies.

22. *For the father does not choose anyone, having accorded all choosing to his son*. οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ πατήρ κρίνει οὐδένα, ἀλλὰ τὴν κρίσιν πᾶσαν δέδωκεν τῷ υἱῷ. The preceding θέλει and the context suggest κρίνω as 'choose' not 'judge', and which interpretation imparts a somewhat different meaning from the conventional one which involves Jesus giving life to 'whomsoever he wishes' and judging them; and a different meaning given how the term 'judgement' has for over two thousand years been interpreted in relation to the Old and the New Testaments.

Instead of such later interpretations, the Evangelist describes how Jesus simply gives life by design because his father - Theos - has given the task of choosing to his son. Which is why Jesus previously said (4:34)

Ἐμὸν βρῶμά ἐστιν ἵνα ποιήσω τὸ θέλημα τοῦ πέμψαντός με καὶ τελειώσω αὐτοῦ τὸ ἔργον

My food is that I undertake the design of the one having sent me and accomplish His work.

Thus here Jesus is affirming that he is indeed annulling the laws of the old covenant: it is he who now chooses who has life everlasting. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:39, 2 Kings 5:7, et seq.

24. *not entered into the choosing*. εἰς κρίσιν οὐκ ἔρχεται. Literally, "does not go to Choosing" - in conventional terms, does not go into judgement - because having heard, and trusted the father through the son, they already have the gift of life everlasting and thus pass straight from death to that new life.

25. *shall hear ... have listened*. ἀκούσουσιν ... ἀκούσαντες. The literal "shall hear" and "that hear" does not clearly express what is meant.

27. *and also gifted him - as the son of a mortal - with the authority of choosing*. καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ κρίσιν ποιεῖν ὅτι υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἐστίν. Literally, "and he gifted him with authority to undertake choosing because he is the son of a mortal." Which explains the following μὴ θαυμάζετε τοῦτο, "be not astonished at this". In regard to υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου as 'son of a mortal' instead of Son of Man, qv. the comment on 1:51. Also, cf. 9:35, Σὺ πιστεύεις εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, which makes perfect sense if Jesus is asking "Do you trust the son of a mortal?" but is somewhat problematic if conventionally interpreted as "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

[4]

### Text

<sup>16</sup> Οὕτω γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται, ἀλλ' ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. <sup>17</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον, ἀλλ' ἵνα σωθῇ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ. <sup>18</sup> ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν οὐ κρίνεται· ὁ δὲ μὴ πιστεύων ἤδη κέκριται, ὅτι μὴ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ μονογενοῦς υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ. <sup>19</sup> αὕτη δέ ἐστιν ἡ κρίσις, ὅτι τὸ φῶς ἐλήλυθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἠγάπησαν οἱ ἄνθρωποι μᾶλλον τὸ σκότος ἢ τὸ φῶς· ἦν γὰρ πονηρὰ αὐτῶν τὰ ἔργα. <sup>20</sup> πᾶς γὰρ ὁ φαῦλα πράσσων μισεῖ τὸ φῶς, καὶ οὐκ ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς, ἵνα μὴ ἐλεγχθῇ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ. <sup>21</sup> ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν ἔρχεται πρὸς τὸ φῶς, ἵνα φανερωθῇ αὐτοῦ τὰ ἔργα, ὅτι ἐν Θεῷ ἐστὶν εἰργασμένα. <sup>22</sup> Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦλθεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν γῆν· καὶ ἐκεῖ διέτριβε μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐβάπτιζεν. <sup>23</sup> ἦν δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων ἐν Αἰνῶν ἐγγὺς τοῦ Σαλείμ, ὅτι ὕδατα πολλὰ ἦν ἐκεῖ· καὶ παρεγίνοντο καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο.

### Commentary

19-20. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. For their deeds were harmful; that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he - as the only begotten son of Theos - knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

21. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose - who do not hide - who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal - about the character of people - and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in



previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing - the opposite of lying and of being deceitful - and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[5]

### Text

Μετὰ ταῦτα ἦν ἑορτὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, καὶ ἀνέβη ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα. <sup>2</sup> Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρα, ἣ ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ Βηθεσδά, πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα. <sup>3</sup> ἐν ταύταις κατέκειτο πλῆθος πολὺ τῶν ἀσθενούντων, τυφλῶν, χωλῶν, ξηρῶν, ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν. <sup>4</sup> ἄγγελος γὰρ κατὰ καιρὸν κατέβαινεν ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσε τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατείχετο νοσήματι. <sup>5</sup> ἦν δὲ τις ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖ τριάκοντα καὶ ὀκτὼ ἔτη ἔχων ἐν τῇ ἀσθενείᾳ. <sup>6</sup> τοῦτον ἰδὼν ὁ Ἰησοῦς κατακείμενον, καὶ γνοὺς ὅτι πολὺν ἤδη χρόνον ἔχει, λέγει αὐτῷ, Θέλεις ὑγιὴς γενέσθαι; <sup>7</sup> ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ ὁ ἀσθενῶν, Κύριε, ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἔχω ἵνα, ὅταν ταραχθῇ τὸ ὕδωρ, βάλλῃ με εἰς τὴν κολυμβήθραν· ἐν ᾧ δὲ ἔρχομαι ἐγώ, ἄλλος πρὸ ἐμοῦ καταβαίνει. <sup>8</sup> λέγει αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς, Ἐγείραι, ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου, καὶ περιπάτει. <sup>9</sup> καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἦρε τὸν κράββατον αὐτοῦ καὶ περιπάτει. Ἦν δὲ σάββατον ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ. <sup>10</sup> ἔλεγον οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ τεθεραπευμένῳ, Σάββατόν ἐστιν· οὐκ ἔξεστὶ σοι ἄραι τὸν κράββατον. <sup>11</sup> ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς, Ὁ ποιήσας με ὑγιῆ, ἐκεῖνός μοι εἶπεν, Ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει. <sup>12</sup> ἠρώτησαν οὖν αὐτόν, Τίς ἐστιν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ εἰπὼν σοι, Ἄρον τὸν κράββατόν σου καὶ περιπάτει; <sup>13</sup> ὁ δὲ ἰαθεὶς οὐκ ᾔδει τίς ἐστιν· ὁ γὰρ Ἰησοῦς ἐξένευσεν, ὄχλου ὄντος ἐν τῷ τόπῳ. <sup>14</sup> μετὰ ταῦτα εὕρισκει αὐτόν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν τῷ ἱερῷ, καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, Ἴδε ὑγιὴς γέγονας· μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε, ἵνα μὴ χειρόν τί σοι γένηται. <sup>15</sup> ἀπῆλθεν ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἀνήγγειλε τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστιν ὁ ποιήσας αὐτόν ὑγιῆ. <sup>16</sup> καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον τὸν Ἰησοῦν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, καὶ ἐζήτουν αὐτόν ἀποκτεῖναι, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ.

### Commentary

2.

*the place of the sheep.* Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

*named in the language of the Hebrews.* ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

3.

*the infirm.* The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

*awaiting a change in the water.* Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

4. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρα, καὶ ἐτάρασσε τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν ταραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατείχετο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. Although the verse is omitted in NA28, and generally regarded as an interpolation, I include it since it is in ASV, Tyndale, Wycliffe, KJV, and Douay-Rheims.

a) *envoy.* As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos.* Regarding ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" - which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' - and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of archetypes and one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English both as a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or deity.

c) *became complete.* ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

8. *bedroll.* κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

9. *And, directly, the man became complete.* καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' - wholeness - for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

10. *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

14. *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction regarding translating ἀμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

16. *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[6] My translation of The Beatitudes is included as Appendix Two.

[7] qv. my *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

[8] Cræft: "this older spelling in an esoteric context implies [...] a particular Arte, the application of particular abilities, skills, and knowledge, especially abilities, skills, and knowledge learned or received in the traditional manner from a master of the Arte or Arts in question. In this esoteric sense, theos is the Master Craftsman, with Palingenesis being a Cræft, an Arte that "is not taught; rather, it is presenced by and when the theos desires". *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, op.cit.

---

## Appendix One

### A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose – perhaps controversially – to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gyy/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, æfter iudea geclensunge, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχρόμαι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν

τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

ooo

In respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαικῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeian Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

### Ἰουδαικῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρμηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρμηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

### Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερέυς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρελήφμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

### Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη: ὅφ' ἧς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

---

## Appendix Two

### The Beatitudes The Learning On The Hillside

#### Τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον

#### The Gospel According To Matthew

#### 5:1-10

#### Text

1 Ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ·  
2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·  
3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.  
4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.  
5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.  
6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.  
7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.  
8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.  
9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.  
10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

#### Translation

1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.  
2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:  
3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.  
4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.  
5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.  
6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.  
7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.  
8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.  
9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.  
10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

#### Commentary

1. ὄρος. Here a hill, rather than a mountain.

2. ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. I take this metaphorically as in a disclosing or a revealing, not literally as in "opening his mouth."

*those there.* Although the Greek text does not explicitly state the fact, the context suggests that Jesus addressed both the multitude and his disciples.

3.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate".

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32, <sup>1</sup> from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the

Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

5. πραῖος. Gentle - in the sense of mild, balanced, temperament - rather than "meek".

6. δικαιοσύνη. Fairness. Not some abstract, legalistic, "justice", and not "righteousness" which word has over centuries acquired sometimes strident and disputable moralistic meanings as well as implying a certain conformity to accepted (and disputable or dogmatic) standards.

7. ἐλεήμων. The classical Latin term misericordia - used by Jerome, and the origin of the English word merciful - expresses the sense well, which is of συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) resulting in compassion. Cf. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρά ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

8.

οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ. Literally, those whose hearts are clean, in the physical sense, as in having undertaken a ritual cleansing of the body. Cf. Corpus Hermeticum, Poemander 22, <sup>2</sup> where as in Luke 11.41 - qv. ἐλεήμων in v. 7 here - it occurs in relation to compassion, the compassionate:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

In respect of καθαροῖς, I prefer *refined* here - as in the Corpus Hermeticum - rather than 'pure' given the disputable nature of the term 'pure' and the connotations acquired over centuries be they religious, sanctimonious, political, or otherwise.

θεὸς. For reasons explained in my commentary on verse I of chapter one of The Gospel According To John - and in my commentaries on tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum [2] - I transliterate θεὸς.

9. οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί. The peaceable ones, which includes pacificators - those who are pacificatory, and thus who are conciliatory and who actively seek peace - and those who have a peaceable disposition.

10. διώκω. Harass, rather than "persecuted" which has acquired too many modern and especially political connotations. Cf. John 5:16, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ, "and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath."

My interpretation, based on John 5:16, is that those who are harassed are so on account of (ἐνεκα) their fairness, not because those who are harassing them disparage or hate fairness in general.

David Myatt  
30.iii.18

ooo

## Notes

1) My translation and commentary - of chapters 1-5 - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

2) D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. Translations And Commentaries*. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369. Gratis pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

---

Greek Bible text from:  
Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others, copyright 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

---

cc David Myatt 2024

All translations by DW Myatt

Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license

---





### Physis And Jesus Of Nazareth

A recent (2024) article in The Telegraph newspaper by Christopher Howse, in his weekly column Sacred Mysteries, and titled *Time to celebrate things too hard to understand*, mentioned physis in connection with Jesus of Nazareth noting that if Jesus is not both human and God then 'mankind' (human beings) has/have not through him been reconciled to God. He also quotes, in a vernacular translation, from the beginning of John 10:18, with the Greek of John:18:

καὶ ἐξουσίαν ἔχω πάλιν λαβεῖν αὐτήν· ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔλαβον παρὰ τοῦ πατρὸς μου. [1]

#### The Historical And Metaphysical Context

In regard to physis, the author of that newspaper article noted that it is a problematic term, used "in different senses by opposing factions." and that "we translate as nature". In my 2017 text *The Concept Of Physis*, [2] I provided the historical context:

"The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and Ierós Lógos tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear, physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay."

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal."

In regard to Jesus of Nazareth, his natural being has most certainly been covered-up or concealed by mortals. Similarly, as portrayed in the Gospels and particularly in the Gospel of John, he is a balance (an Aristotelian μέσον) - qv. Appendix Two: Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a - between the being that he is as a mortal, that he was before the

Incarnation, and potentially will be (and became) after the Passion and his mortal death,

As also noted in *The Concept Of Physis*, in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum Physis is personified in the following way:

τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἢ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις φύσει ἀνανεουμένη·  
ἐν γὰρ τῷ θείῳ καὶ ἡ φύσις κατέστηκεν.

"The divine is all of that mixelion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis  
For Physis is presenced in the divine." [3]

That is, the divine is presenced on Earth through Jesus, who renews or can renew our life on Earth, bringing an awareness that our mortal death is not the end of our life.

According to chapter five of the Gospel of John:

33 ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλκατε πρὸς Ἰωάννην, καὶ μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ·  
34 ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ παρὰ ἀνθρώπου τὴν μαρτυρίαν λαμβάνω, ἀλλὰ ταῦτα λέγω ἵνα ὑμεῖς σωθῆτε.  
35 ἐκεῖνος ἦν ὁ λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἠθελήσατε ἀγαλλιαθῆναι πρὸς ὥραν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ αὐτοῦ.  
36 Ἐγὼ δὲ ἔχω τὴν μαρτυρίαν μεῖζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου· τὰ γὰρ ἔργα ἃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ ἵνα τελειώσω αὐτά, αὐτὰ τὰ ἔργα ἃ ποιῶ μαρτυρεῖ περὶ ἐμοῦ ὅτι ὁ πατήρ με ἀπέσταλκεν.  
37 καὶ ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ ἐκεῖνος μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ ἐμοῦ. οὐτε φωνὴν αὐτοῦ πώποτε ἀκηκόατε οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἑώρακατε,  
38 καὶ τὸν λόγον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔχετε ἐν ὑμῖν μένοντα, ὅτι ὃν ἀπέστειλεν ἐκεῖνος, τούτῳ ὑμεῖς οὐ πιστεύετε.  
39 ἔραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔχειν· καὶ ἐκεῖναί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ·  
40 καὶ οὐ θέλετε ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχητε. [4]

33 You inquired after John, and he was evidential to the veritas.  
34 And, although the testimony I receive is not from people, I say these things that you may be rescued.  
35 He: a lantern, firefull and revealing; you: desirous to seasonably exult in his phaos.  
36 I however have a testimony beyond that of John, for the deeds the father gifted me that I should accomplish them - the deeds which I do - are witness that the father sent me,  
37 With the father - he who sent me - a witness about me: he whose voice you have never heard, whose likeness you have never observed,  
38 With his Logos not remaining within you for you do not trust the one he sent.  
39 You search the writings because you suppose that there is within them life everlasting and that they are a witness about me.  
40 And yet have no desire to go to me so that you might have Life. [5]

Such a presencing and renewance has often been considered as the central mysterium of Christianity and one 'esoteric' to this very day as manifest in the Eucharist of the Mass where we mortals can according to Christian doctrine partake of the numinosity of theos as presenced in The Last Supper and which return and re-presentation is the real aim of our mortal lives. This is θέωσις in the sense of being mystically (re)united with theos while still being mortal, human, because there is and cannot be any partaking of, any participation in, the essence, the quidditas - οὐσία - of theos, a sense expressed by Maximus of Constantinople,

τῆς ἐπὶ τῷ θεωθῆναι τὸν ἄνθρωπον μυστικῆς ἐνεργείας λήψεται πέρας κατὰ πάντα τρόπον χωρὶς μόνης  
δηλονότι τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν κατ' οὐσίαν ταυτότητος. [Quæstiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra, XXII  
[Patrologiae Graeca, 90, c.0318]

the end of the opus mysterium of human beings becoming of Theos can be in all ways except one, namely that of having the identity of His Essence.

This becoming, this wordless awareness of the numinous through the Eucharist of the mystery of the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth, is well expressed by the Greek word θειότης which occurs in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, 1.20 where it led to some theological discussions regarding how and in what God is manifest, since some commentators apparently mistakenly equated θειότης with θεότης. The Latin of Jerome is:

invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur sempiterna quoque eius virtus et divinitas

which translates the Greek θειότης by the Latin divinitas, a word used by Cicero, with the Greek text of Romans, 1.20, as in NA28, [1]

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδῖος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης

The Wycliffe translation:

For the invisible things of him, that be understood, be beheld of the creature of the world, by those things that be made, yea, and the everlasting virtue of him and the Godhead.



King James Bible:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.

Douay-Rheims:

For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity.

Were I to temerarily venture my own 'interpretation of meaning' of the Greek – that is, my non-literal translation – it would be along the following lines:

Through the foundation of the Kosmos, those unseen beings of that Being were visible, apprehensible by the beings which that Being produced, as also the sempiternal influence of that Being, and divinity-presenced.

In which interpretation I have endeavoured to express the metaphysical – the ontological – meaning, and have taken αὐτοῦ – literally, "of him/his" – as "of that Being". In addition, Also, δύναμις is – at least in my fallible opinion – more subtle than the strident "might" or "power" translations impute, suggesting instead "influence" as in tractate III:1 of the Corpus Hermeticum, where it interestingly occurs in relation to θεῖος - δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χάει, by the influence of the numen – and where the term physis also occurs.

My translation of tractate III:1 is as follows:

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance. In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen, Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos. Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground, Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence. And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis. [6]

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις. ἦν γὰρ σκότος ἄπειρον ἐν ἀβύσσῳ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερὸν, δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χάει. ἀνείθη δὴ φῶς ἅγιον καὶ ἐπάγη τὴν ἄμμιον ἐξ ὑγρᾶς οὐσίας στοιχεῖα καὶ θεοὶ πάντες καταδιερῶσι φύσεως ἐνσπόρου.

## Summa

It is my understanding that not only is the Greek term physis (φύσις) appropriate in describing the metaphysical and the human nature of Jesus of Nazareth but also that the earlier, and sometimes pagan metaphysical context of that and other terms such as θεϊότης (divinitas) are appropriate in describing the mysterium that is the Eucharist where divinity is wordlessly presenced, with there thus being an historical thread to the new apprehension of the divine that the life Jesus of Nazareth, as recounted in the Gospels, and in his mortal and divine nature, in his Passion and crucifixion, presenced on Earth over two millennia ago.

David Myatt  
June 2024

Image credit:  
Icon of Jesus Pantocrator, Δέησις Mosaic  
Hagia Sophia, c. 1260 CE

≡ ≡ ≡

[1] NA28. Nestle-Aland. Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012

My interpretation of meaning: "No one plucks this [life] from me for I have the authority to bring that to pass for myself and the authority to bring it back. For that is the command I received from my Father."

Douay-Rheims: "No man taketh it away from me: but I lay it down of myself, and I have power to lay it down: and I have power to take it up again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

[2] In this extract I have not included the footnotes which accompany the text which is here provided as Appendix One.

[3] Appendix One.

[4] Greek text from NA28, op.cit

[5] My interpretation of meaning, qv. The Gospel According to John: Translation And Commentary, Volume I,

My commentary, in that text, on these verses:

33.

a) you inquired after John. ὑμεῖς ἀπεστάλκατε πρὸς Ἰωάννην. Literally, "you dispatched unto John," referring to 1:19, the priests and Levites dispatched from Jerusalem.

b) and he was evidential to the veritas. καὶ μεμαρτύρηκεν τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. That is, he attested - gave evidence concerning - the veritas. Regarding veritas, qv. the comment on πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία, 1:14.

35.

a) lantern. λύχνος. The term 'lamp' is inappropriate given its modern connotations.

b) firefull and revealing. καίόμενος καὶ φαίνων. I take this metaphorically - the burning fire of the lantern shines a bright revealing light - rather than the literal "burning and bright".

c) In regard to phaos, qv. 1:4-5. Cf. Poemandres, 32, ζῶην καὶ φῶς; Eusebius, Historia Ecclesiastica, I:2, τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα.

36. beyond that of John. μείζω τοῦ Ἰωάννου. Not the rather strident 'greater than' - with its implication of 'better than' - but the comparative 'beyond that' as in an elder or someone fully-grown who is years beyond the age of someone younger, qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 358,

ὥς μήτε μέγαν μήτ' οὖν νεαρῶν τιν' ὑπερτελέσαι μέγα δουλείας γάγγαμον ἄτης παναλώτου  
Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits of Misfortune's all-taking  
enslaving vast trawl.

37. whose likeness you have never observed. οὔτε εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἐωράκατε. An interesting question of interpretation here is the meaning of εἶδος. Whether to translate as 'form' - with a possible implied reference to Plato's 'theory of forms' - or as the literal 'shape' or 'appearance'. Given the context - and 6:46, οὐχ ὅτι τὸν πατέρα ἐώρακέν τις εἰ μὴ ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, οὗτος ἐώρακεν τὸν πατέρα - I take the literal meaning; hence likeness, as in Wycliffe.

39. you search the writings. ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς. qv. 2:22 regarding γραφή not as the post-Hellenic exegetical 'scripture' but as having the usual Hellenistic meaning of 'that which is written', a writing. The ASV [Anglo-Saxon version] has Smeageað halige gewritu.

The Gospel According to John: Translation And Commentary, Volume I, op. cit.

[6] In respect of the translation:

The numen of all beings is theos. Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός. The sense of δόξα here, especially given the following mention of θεῖος and φύσις, is of immanence and of transcendent sublimity, encompassing both (i) the interpretation given to the word in LXX and the New Testament, of a divine glory (qv. Exodus 16:10, Matthew 25:31, and Luke 2:9) and thus of what is considered to be - that is, is outwardly manifest as - glorious, or splendid, as in Matthew 4:8, a sense well-expressed in the Latin of Jerome: iterum adsumit eum diabolus in montem excelsum valde et ostendit ei omnia regna mundi et gloriam eorum, and (ii) the classical, more personal sense, of honour, and reputation or repute, the latter as for example referenced by Boethius: Unde non iniuria tragicus exclamat: ὦ δόξα, δόξα, μυρίοισι δὴ βροτῶν οὐδὲν γεγῶσι βίοντον ὥγκωσας μέγαν (Book III, vi).

Hence I have opted for 'numen', rather than the usual 'splendour' or 'glory' which do not, in my view given their modern connotations and common usage, express the sense of the Greek; with the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: "numinal and of numinal physis", where by numinal - in this ἱερός λόγος - is meant divine not necessarily in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical God but in the more general sense of pertaining to divinity in general.

τῶν ὄντων. What is real/what exists (Reality/Existence) - qv. the beginning of the Poemandres tractate, and my commentary thereon, in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

νοῦς. Perceivation, not 'mind', qv. Poemandres 2.

substance. ὕλη, the materia of 'things' and living beings - contrasted with οὐσία, essence. qv. Poemandres 10.

sapientia. σοφία. qv. Poemandres 29.

vigour. ἐνέργεια. In the sense of vitality and vigorous activity. See my note on ἡ εἰμαρμένη, Poemandres 15.

Abyss. ἄβυσσος.

A delicate apprehending pneuma. πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν. In respect of νοερός, the sense here is not 'intelligent'/'intelligence' - as in "quickness or superiority of understanding, sagacity", etcetera - but rather of self-

awareness; that is, of possessing a faculty to perceive, comprehend, and to rationally understand the external world. Which is why I have opted for 'apprehending'. influence. δύναμις. Not here 'force' or 'power' per se but rather the influence arising from, inherent in, the numen by virtue of the numinosity of theos. The kind of influence which can nurture a 'delicate apprehending pneuma'.

Kaos. χάος.

numinous phaos. φῶς ἅγιον. Regarding the transliteration of φῶς - using the Homeric φάος (phaos) - see my commentary on Pœmandres 4; and regarding ἅγιος as 'numinous', rather than the conventional 'holy' or 'sacred', refer to the commentary on Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς above, and especially the note on the duality of the numinous in pagan weltanschauungen in my commentary on Pœmandres 5.

---

## Appendix One

### The Concept Of Physis

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and ἱερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [1], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [2]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [3].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [4] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean [...]

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivance; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivance; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [5]

Physis is also personified in the ἱερός Λόγος tractate:

"The divine is all of that miction: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis  
For Physis is presented in the divine." [6]

### The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [7] and by abstractions, [8] both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion,

an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [9] is a concealment of that relationship;  
(iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;  
(iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;  
(v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings. [10]

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological.

Notes

[1] Refer to Appendix Two below.

[2] πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[3] Refer to Appendix VI, *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*, of *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit.

[4] Pœmandres 3. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[5] Pœmandres 16-18. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, op.cit.

[6] ἱερός Λόγος 3; qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, op.cit.

[7] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

[8] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[9] Refer, for example, to my *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness in The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[10] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

---

## Appendix Two

### Notes on Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a

#### Text

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

#### Translation

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

## Commentary And Notes

physis. φύσις. A transliteration, since (i) this is a fundamental philosophical principle/term that requires contextual interpretation, and (ii) the English words 'nature' and Nature not only do not adequately describe this principle but also lead to and have led to certain misunderstandings of Aristotle in particular and of classical Greek culture in general.

quidditas. οὐσία. Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word 'quiddity' - is more appropriate here than 'essence', given the metaphysical (ontological) context and given that 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical connotations. An interesting alternative would be the scholastic term haecceity. As with physis, quidditas is a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation.

changelement inherent. The expression ἀρχὴν κινήσεως is crucial to understanding what Aristotle means in respect of physis. In regard to κίνησις, since Aristotle here does not mean 'motion' or 'movement' in the sense of Newtonian physics (with its causal concepts of force, mass, velocity, kinetic energy), and since such physical movement is what the English words 'motion' and 'movement' now most usually denote, then alternatives must be found. Hence the translation 'changelement'.

For what Aristotle is describing here is 'change', as for example in the natural development, the unfolding, the growth, of some-thing living that occurs because it is living; because it is possessed of Life and which Life is the ἀρχή of the changelement, the 'original being' (the φύσις) from whence being-becomes to be often perceived and classified by us in orderly ways.

What is described is an a-causal change, of being-becoming - of being unfolding - and thus fulfilling the potentiality of being within it. Hence why here Aristotle writes ἀρχὴν κινήσεως, which describes the potential changelement inherent in certain beings. 1 That is, the a-causal origin of beings-becoming, or having become, and which beings (having changed, developed, unfolded) we then perceive and classify in orderly ways 2, such as by shape or usefulness to us, or by a notion such as causality: in terms of physical- 'movement'. Which is why, in Aristotle, there is a relation between φύσις, μορφή, and εἶδος - εἶδος in the sense of 'perceivation' and not, as in Plato, denoting an abstract 'form' or an 'ideal' - διὸ καὶ ὅσα φύσει ἔστιν ἢ γίγνεται, ἤδη ὑπάρχοντος ἔξ οὗ πέφυκε γίγνεσθαι ἢ εἶναι, οὕτω φαινὲν τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν ἔαν μὴ ἔχη τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὴν μορφήν.

Thus φύσις is what is a-causal in beings and which acausality is the origin of the 'natural' order that unfolds because of the potentiality of being to become, to presence in the causal, whence to be perceived by us in various orderly arrangements and/or arranged in terms of usefulness, and which arrangements/usefulness include τὸ καλόν - and thus schemata, τάξις 3 - and ἀρετή.

substantia. ὕλη. I have chosen to use the etymon of the English word 'substance' - qv. substantia in Thomas Aquinas, Sententia libri Metaphysicae - to again (i) emphasize the need for contextual interpretation in respect of a specific philosophical term, and (ii) to avoid whatever misunderstandings may arise from the modern (non-ontological) connotations of words such as 'matter' and 'substance'.

as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changelements predicated on it. καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. The sense of γένεσις here implies a 'coming-into-being' rather than just 'generation', just as φύω implies a being 'burgeoning' - unfolding, revealing itself (its physis) - rather than just 'growing'.

the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is. The Greek word ἐντελεχεία is compounded from ἐν ελεῖ ἔχει and the sense here - in relation to ἐνυπάρχουσα - seems to be twofold: of a being as an unchanged being, and of what a being has become (or is becoming) as a result of a change, for both types of being actually exist, are real. One exists as a being as it is and has remained, and one exists as the being it has become (or is in the process of becoming) through the potential for changelement inherent within it. Thus, for Aristotle, physis denotes the being of both types of being.

ooo

[1] In respect of ἀρχή as implying what is primarily inherent, qv. 1012b-1013a.

[2] As Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Sciendum est autem, quod principium et causa licet sint idem subiecto, differunt tamen ratione. Nam hoc nomen principium ordinem quemdam importat; hoc vero nomen causa, importat influxum quemdam ad esse causati." Sententia libri Metaphysicae, liber 5, lectio 1, n 3.

[3] Regarding 1078a, τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἶδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὠρισμένον (the most noticeable expressions of kalos are schemata and harmony and consonancy), my view - given the context - is that τάξις here is best translated as "schemata", rather than "order" or "arrangement" both of which are vague, open to mis-interpretation, and unrelated to the context, which context is mathematical beauty. Similarly, ὀρίζω (to me) suggests consonancy, echoing as that (now somewhat obscure) English word does both by its use by, among others, Shakespeare (Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2, 286) and also by its relation to the almost 'mathematical beauty' of some music (as evident for example in the counterpoint of JS Bach).

Furthermore, just because the Greek has συμμετρία it does not necessarily follow that the English word 'symmetry' is an appropriate translation, considering how the word symmetry is now used and has been used, in the West for many centuries, and especially in relation to art (in terms, for example, of objects and the human body).

Given that Aristotle in 1078a is referring to geometry in particular and mathematics in general, then an appropriate translation is 'harmony' - as in "a collation of representative signs or marks, so arranged that they exhibit their agreement and account for their discrepancies or errors." A harmony, in other words, that is most evident (as I mentioned in my essay) in Euclid's Elements, as schemata and consonancy are therein evident, most of the contents (theorems) of which book - deriving from people such as Pythagoras - were known to Aristotle.

Thus, a translation such as "the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness" can in my opinion lead to projecting onto Aristotle what he may not necessarily have meant; and projecting onto in respect of how we now, over two thousand years after Aristotle, understand and use such common English terms. Hence, also, why I sometimes use obscure English words (which may suggest a relevant meaning) or transliterations (as in physis).

---

**Bibliography**

§ *The Gospel According to John: Translation And Commentary*, Volume I, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

§ *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

---

Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License

---

## **The Beatitudes**

### **The Learning On The Hillside**

#### **Τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον**

#### **The Gospel According To Matthew**

**5:1-10**

#### **Text**

- 1 Ἰδὼν δὲ τοὺς ὄχλους ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος, καὶ καθίσαντος αὐτοῦ προσῆλθαν αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ·
- 2 καὶ ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ ἐδίδασκεν αὐτοὺς λέγων·
- 3 Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.
- 4 μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.
- 5 μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.
- 6 μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.
- 7 μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.
- 8 μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.
- 9 μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.
- 10 μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

#### **Translation**

- 1 Observing the multitudes, he ascended the hill and, having sat down, his disciples approached him.
- 2 Then, a revelation, for he instructed those there by saying this:
- 3 Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.
- 4 Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.
- 5 Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.
- 6 Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.
- 7 Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.
- 8 Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.
- 9 Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.
- 10 Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.

## Commentary

1. ὄρος. Here a hill, rather than a mountain.

2.

ἀνοίξας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ. I take this metaphorically as in a disclosing or a revealing, not literally as in "opening his mouth."

*those there.* Although the Greek text does not explicitly state the fact, the context suggests that Jesus addressed both the multitude and his disciples.

3.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate".

On a pedantic note, English translations invariably add "are" after μακάριος whereas the Greek - μακάριοι οἱ - reads "fortunate, the..."

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32, [1] from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that



existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Εδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim, שָׁמַיִם

5. πρᾶος. Gentle - in the sense of mild, balanced, temperament - rather than "meek".

6. δικαιοσύνη. Fairness. Not some abstract, legalistic, "justice", and not "righteousness" which word has over centuries acquired sometimes strident and disputable moralistic meanings as well as implying a certain conformity to accepted (and disputable or dogmatic) standards.

7. ἐλεήμων. The classical Latin term misericordia - used by Jerome, and the origin of the English word miséricordious - expresses the sense well, which is of συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) resulting in compassion. Cf. Luke 11.41 (πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημοσύνην, καὶ ἰδοὺ πάντα καθαρά ὑμῖν ἐστίν), Acts 10:2, κτλ.

8.

οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ. Literally, those whose hearts are clean, in the physical sense, as in having undertaken a ritual cleansing of the body. Cf. Corpus Hermeticum, Poemandres 22, [2] where as in Luke 11.41 - qv. ἐλεήμων in v. 7 here - it occurs in relation to compassion, the compassionate:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς  
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,  
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται  
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες  
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceiviation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

In respect of καθαροῖς, I prefer *refined* here - as in the Corpus Hermeticum - rather than 'pure' given the disputable nature of the term 'pure' and the connotations acquired over centuries be they religious, sanctimonious, political, or otherwise.

θεὸς. For reasons explained in my commentary on verse I of chapter one of The Gospel According To John - and in my commentaries on tractates from the Corpus Hermeticum [2] - I transliterate θεὸς.

9. οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί. The peaceable ones, which includes pacificators - those who are pacificatory, and thus who are conciliatory and who actively seek peace - and those who have a peaceable disposition.

10. διώκω. Harass, rather than "persecuted" which has acquired too many modern and especially political connotations. Cf. John 5:16, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐδίωκον οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τὸν Ἰησοῦν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἐποίει ἐν σαββάτῳ, "and thus did the Judeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath."

My interpretation, based on John 5:16, is that those who are harassed are so on account of (ἐνεκα) their fairness, not because those who are harassing them disparage or hate fairness in general.

David Myatt  
30.iii.18

ooo

### Notes

[1] My translation and commentary - of chapters 1-5 - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

---

Greek Bible text from:  
Novum Testamentum Graece, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others,  
copyright 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

---

---

# **Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos**

**David Myatt**

ooo

Second Edition  
2017

## Introduction

This book originated from some - mostly philosophical - questions asked of me during the Spring and Summer of 2017. One of those questions was:

You talk about how you have an appreciation for rural communities and how these communities sometimes have a wordless appreciation of the cosmos and share an aural tradition which originated decades if not centuries ago. Would you say that such a perspective is slowly being lost because of our modern way of living and that this lack of contact with the wordless, with nature, will cause more abstractions and thus, more suffering? If so, do you believe that such a rural way of living facilitates a journeying (both as an individual person and as a collectivity) toward Wu-Wei and a restoration of δίκη?

To which my answer was:

My fallible intimation - which yet again is nothing original or new - is that such a wordless perception of the Cosmos, and especially of Nature, is indeed being slowly lost for a variety of reasons. One reason seems to be an increasing dependence on technology and machines over and above crafts and work which require both a certain skill and the use of one's hands and hand-held tools, which crafts and work involve a certain careful, and slow, and often a toiling way of working. Another reason is a lack of direct, personal, and rural contact with Nature over the Seasons of many years, which rural closeness - through a working-there or a dwelling-there for years - reveals the natural rhythms of Nature and the Cosmos beyond, one of which rhythms is the process of balance, manifest as this sometimes is in good seasons, in bad seasons, and in birth, living, work, and death. Another reason is that for so many in the modern West there is no longer an ancestral culture of which one is a living, dwelling, part - a connexion between the past and the future and a connexion with a rural place of dwelling - and which culture preserves the slowly learned wisdom of the past, manifest as that often is in aurally and personally learning what is right, what is wrong, and thus how one should behave in order to maintain the natural balance of life. Instead there are external influences, changeable, and changing, manufactured and disposable, often material and egoistical and hubriatic in ethos and increasingly being rapidly relayed through various types of readily accessible media.

This took me beyond the mystical and somewhat eremitic and very personal weltanschauung I had developed in the previous five or so years which centred

around a non-involvement - communal, social, political, cultural - except in the immediacy-of-the-moment in respect of personal honour.

A re-reading of classical authors such as Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Homer, Plutarch, and Thucydides, among others, together with my on-going translations of tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, made me consider whether it would be possible to provide an understanding of the numinous such that, for instance, what ancient (Greco-Roman) anthropomorphic deities and their interaction with mortals represented and presenced in terms of ethos was expressed ontologically, in terms of Being, beings, and φύσις (physis) thus providing a better understanding of that ancient spirituality; a better understanding of the numinous, and of why Christianity supplanted in the lands of Europe that ancient pagan spirituality [1] and developed an ethos and a culture different in many respects from the ethos and culture of ancient Greece and Rome, a development that has culminated in what seems to be a modern schism between a Christian culture extolling the virtues of compassion, tolerance, inclusion, and equality - that is, which is more balanced in respect of the masculine and the muliebral - and a Christian culture which retains and seeks to maintain what its proponents describe as a more traditional Christian ethos and practice evident for instance in their disdain for and often condemnation of - on the basis of their interpretation of the Scriptures - those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

Which schism returns us to a fundamental difference between Christianity (past and present) and the culture of ancient Greece and Rome, which is the Christian reliance on the Scriptures (and thus on its interpretation) and the Christian requirement that individuals not only trust someone whose mortal death occurred millennia ago but also believe that that person was, on the basis of the σημεῖα (signs) and δυνάμεις (miracles) described in parts of those Scriptures, the son of God. This difference inclines me to favour the type of pagan spirituality that was manifest in ancient Greece and Rome where, for example, τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν were related to and defined by certain living individuals: individuals of beauty; individuals of valour and courage; individuals of honour, manners, and nobility.

Yet the culture that arose around such an ancient spirituality was not noted for its compassion, tolerance, inclusion, and equality, and part of which ancient culture was an acceptance that enslavement of human beings was natural and necessary. Is such a pagan spirituality consistent with such (in my view, necessary) virtues as compassion, tolerance, inclusion, and equality? Is the combination of the pagan weltanschauung evident in the writings of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Cicero and many other classical authors, and the pagan mysticism evident in many of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, more human in physis, more balanced, and could possibly be more productive of a healthy ψυχή, than revealed religions such as Christianity? Is the fundamental difference between such a pagan spirituality and Christianity (past and present) simply the difference between λόγος (logos) understood as 'reason' and

λόγος understood as faith and belief and thus as the Word of God?

This book represents my fallible attempt to answer such questions and to metaphysically express the substance of that *paganus weltanschauung*. Given that such a *paganus weltanschauung* could possibly be productive of a healthy ψυχή, it seems somewhat unfortunate - and perhaps also symptomatic - that the study of the literature of Ancient Greece and Rome has been in decline in the lands of the West for decades.

Although I have made extensive use of my translations of certain classical authors and of various hermetic texts as well as the Gospel of John, given that those translations are currently quite accessible I have not except on a few occasions explained my interpretations of certain Greek or Latin terms - exempli gratia: νοῦς as (according to context) perceivance, perceivation, rather than the conventional 'mind' - since such explanations are available either in the commentaries which accompany my translations of various hermetic texts and the Gospel of John, or in my writings concerning my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos.'

For this Second Edition, I have clarified and extended the text in several places, added a revised version of my essay *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way* as an Appendix, and taken the opportunity to correct some typos.

David Myatt  
2017

[1] As I note in the text, I prefer the term *paganus* - a transliteration of the classical Latin, denoting as it does connection to Nature, to the natural, more rural, world - in preference to 'pagan' since *paganus* is, in my view and in respect of the Greco-Roman ethos, more accurate given what the term 'pagan' now often denotes.

---

## Chapter One

An instructive example of the difference between the ethos of ancient Greece and the ethos of Christianity occurs in section 10 of tractate IX of the Corpus Hermeticum:

ταῦτά σοι, Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐννοοῦντι, ἀληθῆ δόξειεν, ἀγνοοῦντι δὲ ἄπιστα.  
τὸ γὰρ νοῆσαί ἐστι τὸ πιστεῦσαι, ἀπιστῆσαι δὲ τὸ μὴ νοῆσαι. ὁ γὰρ  
λόγος οὐ φθάνει μέχρι τῆς ἀληθείας. [1]

If you are insightful, Asclepius, such things should be uncovered for you, although without insight they would be doubted. For noesis is in trusting, while doubting is not noesis, with my logos attaining veracity. [2]

This statement of the need - the requirement - to trust a person and thus believe the doctrine or beliefs they are expounding is evidential of all revealed religions, from Judaism to Christianity to Islam. In Christianity, the requirement is to trust in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and to believe that the Passion, the death, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Jesus are divine σημεῖα (signs, in the Gospel of John), and divine δυνάμεις (miracles, in the other Gospels) and which God-given signs or miracles are the basis of that trust and the foundation of Christian belief:

καὶ καθὼς Μωϋσῆς ὑψωσεν τὸν ὄφιν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, οὕτως ὑψωθῆναι  
δεῖ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ἐν αὐτῷ ἔχῃ ζωὴν  
αἰώνιον. Οὕτως γὰρ ἠγάπησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν κόσμον, ὥστε τὸν υἱὸν τὸν  
μονογενῆ ἔδωκεν, ἵνα πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων εἰς αὐτὸν μὴ ἀπόληται ἀλλ'  
ἔχῃ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. (John 3:14-16) [3]

For just as Moses elevated that serpent in a forsaken place so will the son of a mortal be elevated so that all those trusting in him might have life everlasting. For Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

In addition, it is apposite that John 20:24-29 describes Thomas as doubting the veracity of the Resurrection of Jesus, with Jesus saying to Thomas:

Ὅτι ἐώρακάς με πεπίστευκας; μακάριοι οἱ μὴ ἰδόντες καὶ  
πιστεύσαντες.

Because you observed me, you have trusted. Those who have not observed yet have trusted are blessed.

There is also a supra-personal trust in what others have written:

Ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι γεγραμμένον ἐστίν, Ὁ ζῆλος τοῦ οἴκου σου καταφάγεται με. ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ, Τί σημεῖον δεικνύεις ἡμῖν, ὅτι ταῦτα ποιεῖς; ἀπεκρίθη Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Λύσατε τὸν ναὸν τοῦτον καὶ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερῶ αὐτόν. εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, Τεσσαράκοντα καὶ ἕξ ἔτεσιν οἰκοδομήθη ὁ ναὸς οὗτος, καὶ σὺ ἐν τρισὶν ἡμέραις ἐγερεῖς αὐτόν; ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἔλεγεν περὶ τοῦ ναοῦ τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ. ὅτε οὖν ἠγέρθη ἐκ νεκρῶν, ἐμνήσθησαν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ ὅτι τοῦτο ἔλεγεν, καὶ ἐπίστευσαν τῇ γραφῇ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ ὃν εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς. (John, 2:17-22)

His disciples recalled that it was written: "Enthusiasm for your house will devour me."

In response, the Judaeans said to him: "What sign do you show us for you doing such things?"

Jesus replied, saying to them: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it."

The Judaeans said: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and you will raise it in three days?"

When therefore he was raised from the dead his disciples recalled that he had said this and trusted what was written and the word that Jesus had spoken."

Which trust led - despite the words of Jesus - to individuals in the centuries that followed to rely on and to "search the writings [the scriptures] because you suppose that there is within them life everlasting and that they are a witness about me," ἐραυνᾶτε τὰς γραφάς, ὅτι ὑμεῖς δοκεῖτε ἐν αὐταῖς ζῶην αἰώνιον ἔχειν καὶ ἐκεῖναί εἰσιν αἱ μαρτυροῦσαι περὶ ἐμοῦ (John, 5:39).

In contrast, the ethos of ancient Greece - well-explained in the first three books of Homer's *Odyssey*, and in many passages in *Thucydides* - is the ethos of respect for the divine manifest as the divine is in named divinities both male and female; in trusting someone based on a personal acquaintance and on knowledge of their reputation established as that has been through personal valourous deeds; in being hospitable to strangers of their own kind; and in not trusting those whose actions or deeds or bad manners have shown them to be disrespectful and/or cowardly and ignoble.

Thus *Thucydides* wrote:

ὅμως δὲ πόλιν μεγάλην οἰκοῦντας καὶ ἐν ἥθεσιν ἀντιπάλοις αὐτῇ τεθραμμένους χρεῶν καὶ συμφοραῖς ταῖς μεγίσταις ἐθέλειν ὑφίστασθαι καὶ τὴν ἀξίωσιν μὴ ἀφανίζειν - ἐν ἴσῳ γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι δικαιοῦσι τῆς τε ὑπαρχούσης δόξης αἰτιᾶσθαι ὅστις μαλακίᾳ ἐλλείπει καὶ τῆς μὴ προσηκούσης μισεῖν τὸν θρασύτητι ὀρεγόμενον - ἀπαλγήσαντας δὲ τὰ ἴδια τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς σωτηρίας ἀντιλαμβάνεσθαι.  
[4]



Since your abode is a great community reared with a suitable ethos, you should not however great the calamity be overwhelmed and thus obscure your reputation - for mortals equally judge those who through weakness lose the reputation they have, as they dislike those who arrogantly try to grasp a reputation that does not belong to them - but instead put aside your sorrows and share in communal safety.

In a passage redolent of the classical paganus ethos [5] and thus worthy of being quoted in full, Homer describes how the youthful Telemachus - son of Odysseus - laments his misfortune to his guest, Athena - "the goddess with those beautiful blue eyes," [6] - who, as classical deities were sometimes wont to do, had 'shapeshifted' and thus disguised herself as Mentès, the proud son of battle-hardened Anchialus and Chief of those most excellent oarsmen, the Taphians, Μέντης Ἀγχιάλοιο δαΐφρονος εὖχομαι εἶναι υἱὸς ἅτὰρ Ταφίοισι φιληρέτμοισιν ἀνάσσω.

According to Homer, Book I, vv 213-268,

τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἦδ' αἶψα  
'τοιγὰρ ἐγὼ τοι, ξεῖνε, μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω.  
μήτηρ μὲν τέ μέ φησι τοῦ ἔμμεναι, αὐτὰρ ἐγὼ γε  
οὐκ οἶδ': οὐ γάρ πώ τις ἐδὼν γόνον αὐτὸς ἀνέγνω.  
ὥς δὲ ἐγὼ γ' ὄφελον μάκαρός νύ τευ ἔμμεναι υἱὸς  
ἀνέρος, ὃν κτεάτεσσιν ἐοῖς ἐπὶ γῆρας ἔτετμε.  
νῦν δ' ὃς ἀποτμότατος γένετο θνητῶν ἀνθρώπων,  
τοῦ μ' ἔκ φασι γενέσθαι, ἐπεὶ σύ με τοῦτ' ἐρεῖνεις.

τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε θεά, γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη:  
'οὐ μὲν τοι γενεήν γε θεοὶ νῶνυμνον ὀπίσσω  
θῆκαν, ἐπεὶ σέ γε τοῖον ἐγείνατο Πηνελόπεια.  
ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπὲ καὶ ἀτρεκέως κατάλεξον:  
225 τίς δαῖς, τίς δὲ ὄμιλος ὅδ' ἔπλετο; τίπτε δέ σε χρεώ;  
εἰλαπίνη ἢ γάμος; ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἔρανος τάδε γ' ἐστίν:  
ὥς τέ μοι ὑβρίζοντες ὑπερφιάλως δοκέουσι  
δαίνυσθαι κατὰ δῶμα. νεμεσσήσαιτό κεν ἀνὴρ  
αἴσχεα πόλλ' ὀρόων, ὅς τις πινυτός γε μετέλθοι.

τὴν δ' αὖ Τηλέμαχος πεπνυμένος ἀντίον ἦδ' αἶψα  
'ξεῖν', ἐπεὶ ἄρ δὴ ταῦτά μ' ἀνείρεαι ἠδὲ μεταλλάξ,  
μέλλεν μὲν ποτε οἶκος ὅδ' ἀφνειὸς καὶ ἀμύμων  
ἔμμεναι, ὄφρ' ἔτι κείνος ἀνὴρ ἐπιδήμιος ἦεν:  
νῦν δ' ἐτέρως ἐβόλοντο θεοὶ κακὰ μητιόωντες,  
οἳ κείνον μὲν αἶστον ἐποίησαν περὶ πάντων  
ἀνθρώπων, ἐπεὶ οὐ κε θανόντι περ ὧδ' ἀκαχοίμην,  
εἰ μετὰ οἷς ἐτάροισι δάμνη Τρώων ἐνὶ δήμῳ,  
ἢ φίλων ἐν χερσίν, ἐπεὶ πόλεμον τολύπευσεν.  
τῷ κέν οἱ τύμβον μὲν ἐποίησαν Παναχαιοί,  
ἠδὲ κε καὶ ὧ παιδὶ μέγα κλέος ἦρατ' ὀπίσσω.  
νῦν δέ μιν ἀκλειῶς ἄρπυιαι ἀνηρεῖψαντο:  
οἷχετ' αἶστος ἄπυστος, ἐμοὶ δ' ὀδύνας τε γόους τε  
κάλλιπεν. οὐδέ τι κείνον ὀδυρόμενος στεναχίζω

οἶον, ἐπεὶ νύ μοι ἄλλα θεοὶ κακὰ κήδε' ἔτευξαν.  
ὅσσοι γὰρ νήσοισιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι,  
Δουλιχίῳ τε Σάμῃ τε καὶ ὑλήεντι Ζακύνθῳ,  
ἢ δ' ὅσσοι κραναὴν Ἰθάκην κάτα κοιρανέουσιν,  
τόσσοι μητέρ' ἐμὴν μνῶνται, τρύχουσι δὲ οἶκον.  
ἢ δ' οὐτ' ἀρνεῖται στυγερὸν γάμον οὔτε τελευτὴν  
ποιῆσαι δύναται: τοὶ δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἔδοντες  
οἶκον ἐμόν: τάχα δὴ με διαρραίσουσι καὶ αὐτόν.

τὸν δ' ἐπαλαστήσασα προσηύδα Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη:  
'ὦ πόποι, ἦ δὴ πολλὸν ἀποιχομένου Ὀδυσῆος  
δεύῃ, ὃ κε μνηστῆρσιν ἀναιδέσι χεῖρας ἐφείη.  
εἰ γὰρ νῦν ἐλθὼν δόμου ἐν πρώτῃσι θύρῃσι  
σταίῃ, ἔχων πήληκα καὶ ἀσπίδα καὶ δύο δοῦρε,  
τοῖος ἔων οἶόν μιν ἐγὼ τὰ πρῶτ' ἐνόησα  
οἶκῳ ἐν ἡμετέρῳ πίνοντά τε τερπόμενόν τε,  
ἔξ Ἐφύρης ἀνιόντα παρ' Ἴλου Μερμερίδα—  
ᾧχετο γὰρ καὶ κεῖσε θοῆς ἐπὶ νηὸς Ὀδυσσεὺς  
φάρμακον ἀνδροφόνον διζήμενος, ὅφρα οἱ εἴη  
ιοὺς χρίεσθαι χαλκήρεας: ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν οὐ οἱ  
δῶκεν, ἐπεὶ ῥα θεοὺς νεμεσίζετο αἰὲν ἐόντας,  
ἀλλὰ πατήρ οἱ δῶκεν ἐμός: φιλέεσκε γὰρ αἰνῶς—  
τοῖος ἔων μνηστῆρσιν ὁμιλήσειεν Ὀδυσσεύς:  
πάντες κ' ὠκύμοροί τε γενοίατο πικρόγαμοί τε.  
ἀλλ' ἦ τοι μὲν ταῦτα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:  
"To you, my guest, I shall declare it with no fear of anyone.  
My mother has announced that I am his - although this is something I myself  
Do not know since no person can ever be completely sure whose offspring he is.  
But I wish I was the lucky son of someone  
Who had attained his old age with all his possessions  
Instead of which - since you have asked me - I am a descendant  
Of the most unlucky of mortals: he whom it is said I am descended from."

In answer, the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said:  
"The gods have decreed that hereafter your descendants  
Will not be lacking in glory since Penelope has given birth to such a son as you.  
But now, without fear of anyone, inform me about the following:  
What have you to do with this crowd feasting here?  
Is it a marriage, a banquet - or perhaps some public festival?  
It is my opinion that they entertain themselves in this hall  
In an overbearing, arrogant ill-mannered way  
And any healthy man who happened to see them  
Would be indignant at such disgraceful things."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:  
"I shall, since you, as a guest, have enquired and asked me about these things.  
This family was wealthy - as it was steadfastly blameless  
While he who was its man resided here.  
But now it is different since the gods resolved to bring us bad luck  
Having concealed him more completely than any other mortal  
Which injures me worse than if they had conquered him  
While he was among his comrades in the land of the Trojans

Or when his companions were nearby after that fighting was finished.  
For then, the entire Achaean race would have prepared a tumulus for him  
With his son inheriting his honourable name, whereas now  
He is without an honourable name having been snatched from us by abductors  
Who took him away silently and unobserved to leave me wounded and lamenting.

But it is not only because of him that I am wounded and grieving  
But because I have other injuries from the bad luck given me by the gods.  
They are those eminent ones, there, who rule in the islands  
Of Dulichium, Samos, Zancythus of the forests  
And those Chiefs of rugged Ithica itself  
All of whom seek to court my mother and who are exhausting this household.  
She cannot refuse what would be an odious marriage  
As she cannot fittingly make an end of this matter  
And so they are killing this household by gnawing away at it  
Just as they could soon break me who is by myself into pieces."

Then Pallas Athena - angry at this - said to him:  
"Before the gods! How great is the need here for the absent Odysseus -  
For him to set about these disrespectful ones with his fists!  
Would that he would arrive at the outer gate of this dwelling  
With his helmet on and holding his shield and two spears  
And as he was when I myself first saw him,  
At my own abode, drinking and enjoying himself  
He having set out from Ephyra and from Ilus son of Mermerus.  
He had gone there in that fast ship of his  
In search of a man-killing potion with which to poison his bronze-headed arrows:  
But that person would not give it since he believed he would be blamed  
By those gods who exist for aeons.

But my own father give it to him, for they were great comrades.  
May it be the same Odysseus who engages those suitors  
So that they all quickly die of the injuries he gives them  
Because of that marriage they had hoped for!  
But whether such things will be, depends on the gods."

Such quotations - and many more could be adduced - clearly illustrate the difference between a *paganus weltanschauung* and the religiosity of a revealed religion such as Christianity. In the *paganus weltanschauung*, there is an engagement with the world; feasting, drinking, enjoyment, combined not only with an awareness of the divine, of the gods, and thus of how the gods involve themselves with mortals, but also an appreciation of τὸ καλόν (the beautiful), of such things as manners, and how and why disrespectful ones should be personally punished by those they have disrespected or by their kin. In Christianity, there is a spiritual, and sometimes a literal, disengagement from the world, born from a belief in the possibility of attaining life everlasting; and a certain reliance on 'sacred' texts, studied and searched for guidance and for answers.

In regard to the *paganus weltanschauung* of ancient Greece, Sophocles expressed an important aspect of it:

οὐκ ἐκ θεῶν τὰ μῶρα καὶ γέλοια χρή χανόντα κλαίειν ὕστερ’

"If what is of the gods amuses you, be assured that lamentation will follow your mirth." [7]

Balanced as such an aspect is by Sappho:

ἄστερες μὲν ἀμφὶ κάλαν σελάνναν  
ἄψ ἀπυκρύπτοισι φάεννον εἶδος  
ὅπποτα πλήθοισα μάλιστα λάμπῃ  
γαῖαν [...] ἀργυρία

Awed by her brightness  
Stars near the beautiful moon  
Cover their own shining faces  
When she lights earth  
With her silver brilliance  
Of love... [8]

While the author of the Poemandres tractate expressed another aspect:

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυσ ὢν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε  
λόγωι ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὢν,  
ἐδημιούργησε διοικητὰς τινὰς ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν  
αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται.

Theos, the perceiviation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos,  
whose logos brought forth another perceiviation, an artisan, who -  
theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the  
perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is  
described as fate.

As Aeschylus expressed yet another aspect centuries before:

ἄλλ’ εἶμι κὰν δόμοισι κωκύσουσ’ ἐμὴν  
Ἀγαμέμνονός τε μοῖραν. ἀρκείτω βίος.  
ἰὼ ξένοι,  
οὔτοι δυσοίζω θάμνον ὥς ὄρνις φόβῳ  
ἄλλως: θανούσῃ μαρτυρεῖτέ μοι τόδε,  
ὅταν γυνὴ γυναικὸς ἀντ’ ἐμοῦ θάνῃ,  
ἀνὴρ τε δυσδάμαρτος ἀντ’ ἀνδρὸς πέσῃ.  
ἐπιξενοῦμαι ταῦτα δ’ ὥς θανουμένη.

Now I will go to that family chanting an elegy about the Destiny  
Of Agamemnon and me. What I have lived has been sufficient.  
My friends:

I am in no way different from a fearful bird, suspicious  
Of a bush. Give testimony to this about my dying:

For me, a woman, another woman shall die -  
For her man, unluckily-wed, another man will fall.  
I - about to die - you received as a guest. [9]

An aspect balanced by Sappho:

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν  
ἔμμεν' ὦνερ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι  
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδυ φωνεί-  
σας ὑπακούει  
καὶ γελαίσας ἰμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν  
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν·  
ὥς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἴδω βρόχε', ὥς με φώναι-  
σ' οὐδ' ἐν ἔτ' εἴκει,  
ἀλλ' ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα <ἔαγε>, λέπτον  
δ' αὐτίκα χρωὶ πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,  
ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἐν ὄρημ', ἐπιρρόμ-  
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,  
<έκαδε> μ' ἴδρωσ ψῦχος κακχέεται, τρόμος δὲ  
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας  
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης  
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὐται

I see he who sits near you as an equal of the gods  
For he can closely listen to your delightful voice  
And that seductive laugh  
That makes the heart behind my breasts to tremble.  
Even when I glimpse you for a moment  
My tongue is stilled as speech deserts me  
While a delicate fire is beneath my skin -  
My eyes cannot see, then,  
When I hear only a whirling sound  
As I shivering, sweat  
Because all of me trembles;  
I become paler than drought-grass  
And nearer to death... [10]

In retrospection, it would therefore seem that the *paganus weltanschauung* evident in the writings of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Cicero and many other classical authors, and the *paganus mysticism* evident in many of the tractates of the *Corpus Hermeticum* [11], might be, when combined, more human in physis, more balanced, and could possibly be more productive of a healthy *ψυχή*, than revealed religions such as Christianity, albeit (i) that the revealed religion of Christianity has evolved, over some two thousand years, to be more empathic, more compassionate, than such a Greco-Roman *weltanschauung*; and (ii) that the Greco-Roman *weltanschauung* has not undergone any evolution at all, and

(iii) that such a Greco-Roman weltanschauung and such a Hellenic pagan mysticism have hitherto been somewhat mis-understood often because of translations of ancient texts which, through an injudicious choice of words, impose modern meanings on such texts resulting in a retrospective re-interpretation.

Given this mis-understanding, it seems pertinent to examine the Greco-Roman weltanschauung in more detail.

ooo

## Notes

[1] The Greek text used is that of A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Tome I, Third Edition, 1972.

[2] Notes on the translation:

*insightful*. Regarding ἐννοέω cf. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1088, εἰ σὺ μὴ τόδ' ἐννοεῖς ἐγὼ λέγω σοι καὶ τάδ' οὐκ ἔρεῖς ψύθῃ, "If you had not observed this, then it is I who have told you - and you cannot pronounce it false."

Here, as in Poemandres 3 - νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν, "to apprehend the physis of beings" - the sense is of having a perceptiveness, and thus of having, or of acquiring, a particular apprehension (cf. *noesis*, below) of certain things; whereas in the Agamemnon, the Chorus contrast their direct, clear, observation of something - their perception and thus their understanding - with the intuitive perceptions and prophecies of Cassandra, going on (vv. 1111-1112) to say to her, οὐπω ξυνῆκα: νῦν γὰρ ἐξ αἰνιγμάτων ἐπαργέμοισι θεσφάτοις ἀμηχανῶ, that the enigma of her unclear oracles are for the moment beyond their cunning, their understanding.

*uncovered*. As elsewhere in Corpus Hermeticum - qv. Poemandres 30, XI:1 et seq - ἀληθής is not something which is 'true' in some abstract disputable sense but rather what is uncovered, revealed, real, demonstrable, an actuality, and thus 'clear'. In personal terms - qv. John 1:14, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθεία - ἀληθεία is veritas: honesty, truthfulness, sincerity.

*noesis*. The process or the act of noetic apprehension. In the Corpus Hermeticum, νοέω and νοερός are often technical (esoteric) and related terms implying a particular type of apprehension, and thus do not necessarily denote what English words such as 'understand', intelligence, and 'intellectual' now so often denote. Qv. tractate XIII:22, "through noesis you have obtained knowledge about yourself and our father," νοερώς ἔγνωσ σεαυτὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα τὸν ἡμέτερον, which requires contextual interpretation, as at XIII:2, σοφία νοερά, noetic sapientia, with noetic sapientia implying in that tractate

that the knowledge and understanding that is noetically acquired transcends - or at least is different from - the ordinary understanding acquired both (a) through observation of and deductions concerning phenomena and (b) through the use of denotata. Cf. the metaphysical terms νοῦς νοερός, νοῦς οὐσιώδης, and νοῦς ζωτικός in *Procli Diadochi In Platonis Timaeum Commentari*, Volume 5, Book 4, 245-247; and *Procli in Platonis Parmenidem Commentaria*, II 733 and IV 887.

*my logos*. Reading ὁ γὰρ λόγος μου φθάνει with the MSS and not the emendation of Nock. As in the title of XIII and elsewhere, λόγος could be translated here as 'discourse'.

[3] The Greek text is from NA28. Nestle-Aland, *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012

[4] The Peloponnesian War, Book II, chapter 6

[5] I prefer to use the term *paganus* - a transliteration of the classical Latin, denoting a connection to Nature, to the natural, more rural, world - in preference to 'pagan' since *paganus* is, in my view and in respect of the Greco-Roman ethos, more accurate given what the term 'pagan' now often denotes.

[6] The Homeric epithet associated with Athena - γλαυκῶπις - is conventionally translated as 'with bright (or gleaming or grey) eyes' which is somewhat nondescript and rather unfitting for a goddess. However, Herodotus (4.108) uses γλαυκόν in reference to a tribe called Budini, living East of the Danube river, with the suggestion being - qv. the description of Tacitus in *Germanorum* I:4, "truces et caerulei oculi, rutilae comae" - of a blue-eyed, red-haired people. Hence my translation of the Homeric epithet as "with beautiful blue eyes" with 'beautiful' appropriately suggestive of a deep-blue and thus of being 'penetratingly' divine.

[7] *Ichneutae*, 369-370.

[8] Fragment 34.

[9] *Agamemnon*, 1313-1320.

[10] Fragment 31.

[11] Tractates such as *Ιερός Λόγος* (III), *Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς* (IV), *Νοῦς πρὸς Ἑρμῆν* (XI), and *Ερμού του τρισεγγίστου προς τον υιόν Τάτ εν ὀρει λόγος ἀπόκρυφος περί παλιγγενεσίας και σιγῆς ἐπαγγελίας* (XIII).

---

## Chapter Two

The spiritual weltanschauung expounded in the Gospel of John - with the requirement that individuals trust the person of Jesus of Nazareth and believe that the Passion, the death, the Resurrection, and the Ascension of Jesus are divine σημεῖα (signs, omens) with Jesus, presented as a mortal, therefore being the Son of God - has, over two thousand years, significantly evolved.

The Johannine weltanschauung with its very human Jesus and its requirement of personal trust in a living being was (some might say, unfortunately) combined with other sources - including the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke - with a new weltanschauung and thence a new religion thus developed codified as that religion was in creeds, declarations, sermons, and dogma by those claiming to be the rightful heirs of such friends of Jesus as Simon Peter, and by those such as Paul of Tarsus who described himself as an apostle. The natural consequences of such codification, such claims of authority and such supra-personal organization, were - given our jumelle human physis - schisms, sects, accusations of heresy, persecution, torture, killings, wars, together with reformation and counter-reformation. That is, centuries of personal suffering deriving from individuals, groups, organizations, 'churches', denominations, and sects having a certitude of knowing regarding their particular interpretation and beliefs. For God - or so they believed - was 'on their side'. A belief fostered by their reliance on and their interpretation of what came to known as 'the Scriptures', the books of the Old and the New Testaments, dealing as those books mostly did with stories about those people the Greek-speaking Romans described as Hebrews. [1]

There thus developed, over centuries and in Europe, a belief - manifest initially in the Code of Justinian (529-534 CE) - that Christianity should both directly and indirectly influence the civil authority, a practice evident in that Code which began *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and which influence over secular affairs continued for over a millennia with witnesses in courts of law, for instance, giving their evidence by holding or touching a copy of the Scriptures and taking an oath affirming that the 'Almighty God' of Christianity was their witness that what they were about to relate was the truth.

In effect, the dominant ethos of Europe, and of European colonies and émigré lands, was not only patriarchal - since both spiritual and civil authority resided in masculous cliques - but also in contrast to, and often the direct opposite of, the paganus ethos of ancient Greece and Rome, evident as that paganus ethos was in many things including:

- (i) the appreciation of personal virtues such as τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν,
- (ii) avoidance of ὕβρις,



(iii) an appreciation of πάθει μάθος,  
(iv) an apprehension - intuitive or philosophical - of what it is convenient to describe as acausality; that is, of how beings, their physis, and their change(s) cannot be correctly understood by positing a primal cause (such as God) which or who is or the origin of such beings and which or who causally determines or can determine, and/or 'know', all the changes of such beings, past-present-future.

The personal classical virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν related to pre-eminent individuals: τὸ καλόν, the beautiful, to individuals of beauty and individuals who manifest a well-balanced demeanour [2]; ἀρετή, arête, to individuals of meritorious conduct, valour and courage; τὸ ἀγαθόν, the good, to individuals of honour, manners, and nobility. The classical pagan ethos thus celebrated such individuals, measured other individuals against them, with such virtues being defined - manifest - by such individuals. [3] However, the Christian ethos that dominated Europe for centuries measured individuals against 'the will of God' and against those individuals who were deemed to be examples of that will, with the supra-personal belief being that 'the will of God' could be found in the Scriptures and/or learned from those in positions of authority within the Christian Church who had themselves derived their understanding from particular interpretations of those Scriptures, either their own or, more often, those of others, past and present. [4]

The classical avoidance of ὕβρις (hubris) - expounded in works by Aeschylus, and in the Antigone and Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles - related the ancient apprehension, enshrined in ancestral tradition and born from centuries of personal experience, that certain deeds were unwise because they upset the natural and necessary cosmic balance and thus tended to result in misfortune for individuals or for families or for communities. In contrast, in Christianity "good" deeds and "bad" or "sinful" deeds were defined by God with his decision as to what is good and bad having been related to us in Scripture.

The classical appreciation of πάθει μάθος - described in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus [5] - related the understanding that pathei-mathos has a numinous (a divine) authority; which is that wisdom and understanding arises or can arise from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering. In contrast, in the Christian ethos numinous authority derives from God, can be found in Scripture, and learned from those in positions of authority within the Christian Church or from those who are believed to possess an understanding of the will of God.

### **An Appreciation Of Acausality**

The classical appreciation of acausality - and thus an important metaphysical difference between the classical and the Christian approach - is perhaps best illustrated by stark examples of communal sacrifice of an individual or

individuals undertaken in order to try and re-establish the natural balance and thus bring good fortune for a community and dispel whatever misfortune has befallen them or may befall them.

As described in both classical myth and in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, Agamemnon sacrifices his daughter Iphigenia:

ἔτλα δ' οὖν  
θυτὴρ γενέσθαι θυγατρός,  
γυναικοποιῶν πολέμων ἄρωγαν  
καὶ προτέλεια ναῶν.  
λιτὰς δὲ καὶ κληδόνας πατρώους  
παρ' οὐδέν αἰῶ τε παρθένειον  
ἔθεντο φιλόμαχοι βραβῆς [...]

τὰ δ' ἔνθεν οὔτ' εἶδον οὔτ' ἐννέπω:  
τέχνη δὲ Κάλχαντος οὐκ ἄκραντοι.  
Δίκα δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσ-  
ιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει:  
τὸ μέλλον δ', ἐπεὶ γένοιτ', ἂν κλύοις: πρὸ χαιρέτω:  
ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.

So he dared  
To become the sacrificer of his daughter  
To aid a battle to avenge a woman  
By so consecrating the ships.  
Her warning of 'Father!', her supplications,  
Her virgin state - were counted as nothing  
By those commanders lusting for battle [...]

I did not see, and do not speak of, what followed these things.  
But the art of Calchas was not so incomplete:  
The goddess, Judgement, favours someone learning from adversity.  
But I shall hear of what will be, after it comes into being:  
Before then, I leave it,  
Otherwise, it is the same as a premature grieving.

(Agamemnon, vv. 224-230, 248-250)

For this sacrifice and for other deeds, Agamemnon himself is later killed by his wife, Clytemnestra, who describes the sacrifice (v. 1420) of her beloved child as a pollution, and which pollution of the numinous could - according to custom - only be removed by the shedding of blood, usually and if possible that of the perpetrator. [6]

Centuries later, Plutarch and Livy recounted how Fabius Maximus, Pontifex of Rome, had - following the defeat of the Roman army by Hannibal at the battle of Cannae - sanctioned the sacrifice of a disgraced Vestal Virgin by having her

buried alive (stupri compertae et altera sub terra, uti mos est, ad portam Collinam necata fuerat, according to Livy, Book XXII). This particular sacrifice - and other sacrifices - seemed, unlike the sacrifice made by Agamemnon, to be successful since Hannibal did not attack Rome and was later defeated by Scipio Africanus at the battle of Zama.

Why the apparent disparity in the outcome to two similar acts of propitiation? Because such disparity - such a manifestation of acausality, of the intuition of there being no absolutely determinable or pre-determined causal outcome to a mortal deed - is an essential if somewhat neglected and rather obscure aspect of the classical paganus weltanschauung; an aspect described mythologically by Sophocles in *Antigone*, 1338:

ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ.

Mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate

Philosophically, it was described in a fragment (80, Diels-Kranz) attributed to Heraclitus:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ  
γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεῶν

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

Also by Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a,

καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά  
πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, there is no perfect, outside agency or primal cause which consciously and in a cause-and-effect manner directs such change:

ὥστε ἡ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνέργεια, μακαριότητι διαφέρουσα, θεωρητικὴ ἂν εἴη:  
καὶ τῶν ἀνθρωπίνων δὴ ἡ ταύτη συγγενεστάτη εὐδαιμονικωτάτη.  
σημεῖον δὲ καὶ τὸ μὴ μετέχειν τὰ λοιπὰ ζῶα εὐδαιμονίας.  
*Nicomachean Ethics* (Book X) 1178b.22

Therefore the activity of theos, excelling others in bliss, is wordless-awareness [θεωρέω] and the nearest thing to that among mortals arises from good-fortune [εὐδαιμονία]. *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book X, 1178b.22

In modern metaphysical terms, there is a mortal apprehension that Being, and

certain beings, are not or cannot be subject to, nor explainable, in terms of causality, in terms of a cause having a particular effect. Nor explained in terms of there being a primal cause which causes all effects. [7] However, such a belief in causality is the *raison d'être* of all religions and doctrines which posit a primal cause (such as an omnipotent creator-God) who brings-into-being and who governs and determines the changes, the changement - the *polemos*, the Destiny, the fate, the fortunes, the *wyrd* - of mortals and other beings.

Less metaphysically, Christianity - along with other religions or *weltanschauungen* which posit an omnipotent, unchanging, creator - assumes or projects a perfect form (ἰδέα/εἶδος) onto the cosmos which mortals have to strive to attain in order to gain some-thing (some ἰδέα/εἶδος) such as life everlasting in some-place (some ἰδέα/εἶδος) such as Heaven, and with their existing a definite, causal, eternal, means - such as scriptures or revelation or 'being chosen' - which describes or explains how such an ἰδέα/εἶδος can be attained. However, in the pagan *weltanschauung* of ancient Greece the activity of *theos* is not scriptures and revelations to his 'chosen people' but rather, as Aristotle noted, a wordless-awareness; and thus for mortals of there existing not the necessity of faith and belief in such scriptures and revelations but rather a personal quest - an *anados*, ἄνοδος - which by utilizing such things as λόγος (reason, discourse) and νοῦς (perceivation) is a quest for understanding and which understanding includes an appreciation of the numinous:

παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς  
καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια,  
καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται  
ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες  
τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ

I, perceivation, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position. (Poemandres 22)

Which "fondly celebrating in song" the *theos* whose being (existence) is a help, is quite different from the Christian faith in and obedience to an unobserved, unobservable, omnipotent God.

A difference also apparent when one compares the sentiment expressed in tractate VIII of the *Corpus Hermeticum* - with its "influencing impression" and empathy and its three θεοὶ (gods) - with a saying by Jesus as narrated in the Gospel of John.

Tractate VIII, 5,

τὸ δὲ τρίτον ζῶιον, ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κόσμου γενόμενος, νοῦν κατὰ βούλησιν τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχων παρὰ τὰ ἄλλα ἐπίγεια ζῶια, οὐ μόνον πρὸς τὸν δεύτερον θεὸν συμπάθειαν ἔχων, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔννοιαν τοῦ πρώτου· τοῦ μὲν γὰρ αἰσθεται ὡς σώματος, τοῦ δὲ ἔννοιαν λαμβάνει ὡς ἄσωμάτου καὶ νοῦ, τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ.

Now, as to the third living being, mortals, brought-into-being as eikon of Kosmos and who, because of the deliberations of the father and beyond the other living beings on Earth, have perceivance and also empathy with the second theos and perception of the first. For of the one there is apprehension as of the corporeal, while of the other there is an influencing impression as of the incorporeal and as of a noble perceivance.

John, 3:36,

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον· ὁ δὲ ἀπειθῶν τῷ υἱῷ οὐκ ὄψεται ζωὴν, ἀλλ' ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ μένει ἐπ' αὐτόν.

Whomsoever trusts in the son shall have life everlasting but whomsoever does not trust the son shall not see that life; rather, the anger of Theos [God] abides on them.

#### **A Mortal Wordless-Awareness**

The mention of empathy - of a mortal wordless-awareness - and of Kosmos (κόσμος) and 'the father' (πατὴρ) in tractate VIII form a natural beginning for developing an ontology, an epistemology, and an understanding of ethics, that while having a foundation in the insights of the classical paganus weltanschauung may nevertheless represent an evolution of that weltanschauung. A natural beginning, since several of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum - for example, I (Poemandres), III, and XI - present or attempt to present that weltanschauung in a metaphysical way, beyond the deities of classical mythos. [8]

In VIII:5, mortals are described as 'eikon of Kosmos' and as having a συμπάθεια with this 'second theos'. In I:6 (Poemandres, section 6) and I:9, theos the father, the first theos, is well-described:

Οὕτω γινώθι· τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπον καὶ ἀκοῦον, λόγος κυρίου, ὁ δὲ νοῦς πατὴρ θεός. οὐ γὰρ διίστανται ἀπ' ἀλλήλων· ἔνωσις γὰρ τούτων ἐστὶν ἡ ζωή. I:6

Then know that within you - who hears and sees - is logos kyrios, although perceivance is theos the father. They are not separated, one from the other, because their union is Life.

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυσ ὢν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὢν, ἐδημιούργησε διοικητὰς τινὰς ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται. I:9

Theos, the perceivation, male-and-female, being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivation, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

Theos is not only perceivation (νοῦς) but also both male and female (ἀρρενόθηλυσ) and which bifurcation explains what, in many of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, the term πατὴρ metaphysically implies. Which is not a literal, anthropomorphic father, but 'the numen of all beings' (qv. III:1, δόξα πάντων ὁ θεός) and the progenitor - the origin, the foundation - of all being, of all that exists (qv. III:1, ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, and XI:3, πηγὴ μὲν οὖν πάντων ὁ θεός) and who by logos (λόγος) forms, presences, all being (qv. I:31, ὁ λόγῳ συστησάμενος τὰ ὄντα).

Thus to equate, as some have done, the πατὴρ (the male-and-female theos) of the Corpus Hermeticum - or, to be pedantic, the πατὴρ of tractates I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII - with the Father (God) as described in the New Testament is in my view a profound mistake.

The description of the male-and-female theos as the father raises the important issue of denotatum [9], and thus the limitation of words and the matter of interpretation of words especially in translations, and thence to why a reliance on written texts, as in Christianity, may well be a mistake.

Moreover, since theos of the Hermetica is perceivation and since - as the tractates make clear - we mortals, we human beings, possess the ability, the faculty, of perceivation then we can utilize that ability together with a wordless-awareness (empathy) to discover the theos (ὁ θεός) within ourselves; a process which is described in the Poemandres tractate as an anados (ἀνοδος) which is the journey through and up the seven spheres which symbolize our material separation from the realms of the divine and thus our separation from immortality.

ooo

## Notes

[1] Qv. Pausanias, Book I, chapter 5, where he writes of Hadrian - whose virtues he extols - who crushed a rebellion by a Hebrew tribe:

Ἀδριανοῦ τῆς τε ἐς τὸ θεῖον τιμῆς ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἐλθόντος καὶ τῶν  
ἀρχομένων ἐς εὐδαιμονίαν τὰ μέγιστα ἐκάστοις παρασχομένου καὶ ἐς  
μὲν πόλεμον οὐδένα ἐκούσιος κατέστη Ἑβραίους δὲ τοὺς ὑπὲρ Σύρων  
ἐχειρώσατο ἀποστάντας

[2] In respect of ancient Greek culture, τὸ καλὸν refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty - the beautiful - but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, qv. Xenophon, *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοὶ  
ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν  
Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὐειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ ἄπειροι

[3] Qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4

Summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris:  
unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona  
sunt

The greatest good is that which is honourable. Also - and you may wonder at this - only that which is honourable is good, with all other 'goods' simply false and deceitful.

Cf. Cicero, *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*, II, 45f

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident.

[4] There is a similarity between this Christian apprehension and that described in certain hermetic texts, such as the beginning of tractate VI of the Corpus Hermeticum:

τὸ ἀγαθόν, ᾧ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ,  
μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ· εἰ δὲ οὕτως, οὐσίαν  
εἶναι δεῖ πάσης κινήσεως καὶ γενέσεως

Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. If so, then it can only be the quidditas of all changement and of geniture.

I incline toward the view that such hermetic weltanschauungen influenced the development of early Christianity, rather than vice versa.

[5]

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων  
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:  
ὄν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-  
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος  
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,  
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;  
Of he who guided mortals to reason,  
Who laid down that this possesses authority:  
*Learning from adversity.*

Agamemnon, 174-183

The Appendix, *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way: The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος*, places the quotation in context.

[6] An often unappreciated aspect of the drama is the defiance and strength shown by Clytemnestra, who is described as a "woman with a man's resolve" (v. 11), who presents herself as a "most ancient fierce Avenger," (1499) and who says, after her killing of Agamemnon, that only "he who can overcome me in a fight will command me." (1423)

[7] In a simplified way and in terms of mythos, this lack of a pre-determinable outcome - a lack of one primal causation - can be understood as the divergence of opinion and deeds among the classical gods in respect of mortals, with an apposite example occurring in The Odyssey with the goddess Athena supporting and helping Odysseus while Poseidon was unrelenting in his rage at Odysseus. In addition Zeus, Chief among the gods, does not act unilaterally in respect of Odysseus but - in typical Hellenic fashion - says to Athena (Book I, vv. 76-77) that there will a gathering of the gods in order to consider the matter of his return to his home, ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἡμεῖς οἶδε περιφραζώμεθα πάντες νόστον.

[8] I have, in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* translated and written commentaries on those tractates which I consider are metaphysically important in respect of understanding this development beyond, yet which (unlike some tractates) retain the essence of, the mythos of the classical paganus weltanschauungen.

[9] I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."



---

### Chapter Three

That various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum present a weltanschauung which is Greco-Roman and not something akin to Christianity is evident in tractate XI:3,

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;  
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.  
[1]

But the Sophia of theos is what?  
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion.

That is, the sophia, the sapientia [2], of theos is presented not in the 'word of God' (scriptures) but in the personal Greek virtues of τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, and in the metaphysical principle denoted by the term αἰὼν. [3] Aion brought Kosmos into being, and is the quidditas of all being (qv. XI:3, οὐσία δὲ ὁ αἰὼν) where by quidditas here is meant the ἀρχέτυπον of entities, the natural presencing of particular beings, and which natural (wordless) presencing is often perceived by mortals by means of - or as - a particular physis, whence our perception and understanding of the character or nature of a particular being or entity, with physis itself thus an eikon (εἰκὼν) of being (qv. I:31, οὗ πᾶσα φύσις εἰκὼν ἔφν). In addition, sapientia is a revealing of all beings (qv. III:1, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν) by means such as physis.

Given such metaphysical beginnings, and the problems associated with denotata, it is possible to suggest an ontology described by terms which are unrelated to gender, unrelated to past anthropomorphisms, and have no or few modern interpretations making them less liable to be the genesis of contemporaneous misunderstandings.

#### The Acausality Hypothesis

What has hitherto been denoted in the Corpus Hermeticum by the male-and-female theos, the progenitor - the origin, the foundation, the father, the artisan [4] - of all that exists, is Being, from whence beings come-into-being; a process described in XI:2 in terms of the metaphysical principles Aeon, Kosmos, and Kronos:

ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γένεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡςπερ οὐσία ἐστὶ τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία, ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ

κόσμου ἢ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἢ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἢ ζωῇ καὶ ὁ θάνατος.

Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

Kronos is brought into existence by Kosmos, with Kronos the origin of geniture - of the life, the spawning and propagation and variance of beings - and also of the death of those beings. [5]

If instead of the term Being we use the term 'acausal', then the acausal is the origin of - but distinct from - the causality that is denoted by Kronos and which causality is most evident to us in the limited duration of our mortal lives. Aion is the acausality of the perceived and perceivable Cosmos: limitless and encompassing all causality, past, present and future, and - in causal terms - never-ending. Living mortal beings, since they have acausality (the theos, ὁ θεὸς) within them, and are an eikon of the cosmos [6] and also possess the faculties, the abilities, of perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια) have a being which is both acausal and causal.

The paganus weltanschauung is thus one which posits that our being, and thence our physis, are a presencing of Being and an eikon, a microcosm, of the acausality and causality which constitutes the cosmos:

κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ζώιου ἀθανάτου ζώιον θνητόν, καὶ ὁ μὲν κόσμος τῶν ζώιων ἐπλεονέκτει τὸ ἀείζωον, καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τὸν λόγον καὶ τὸν νοῦν. θεατῆς γὰρ ἐγένετο τοῦ ἔργου τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, καὶ ἐθαύμασε καὶ ἐγνώρισε τὸν ποιήσαντα.

A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings, for just as the ever-living cosmic order had an advantage over them so did they have an advantage over other living beings in their cosmos because of Logos and Perceivance. Thus did mortals perceive the works of theos, admire them, gaining knowledge of their creator.

That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient paganism and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine. Hence why the twenty-sixth chapter of the book *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda* by Marsilii Ficini (published in 1489 CE) has as its heading: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona, "How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because

cosmically aligned."

The acausality of the cosmos is manifest in Life, geniture, and in identity, in the variety, the type, and variation of living beings and their physis. Causality is manifest in the perceptable, the harmonious, the physical cosmic order and in the process that is the changement of that order and part of which changement is the inevitable death of physical living beings, with only we mortals, we human beings - so far as we know - having a physis such that we possess the capability - the gift - to become immortal:

ὅσοι δὲ τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ δωρεᾶς μετέσχον, οὗτοι [...] κατὰ σύγκρισιν τῶν ἔργων ἀθάνατοι ἀντὶ θνητῶν εἰσι, πάντα ἐμπεριλαβόντες τῷ ἑαυτῶν νοί, τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς, τὰ ἐν οὐρανῷ, καὶ εἴ τί ἐστιν ὑπὲρ οὐρανόν· τοσοῦτον ἑαυτοὺς ὑψώσαντες, εἶδον τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἰδόντες συμφορὰν ἡγήσαντο τὴν ἐνθάδε διατριβήν· καταφρονήσαντες πάντων τῶν σωματικῶν καὶ ἀσωμάτων ἐπὶ τὸ ἐν καὶ μόνον σπεύδουσιν.

And yet [...] those who partake to that gift from theos become, when set against their deeds, immortal instead of mortal. For they with their perceivance apprehend the Earthly, the Heavenly, and what is beyond the Heavens. Having gone so far, they perceive what is honourable, and, having so perceived, they regard what preceded this as a delay, as a problem and, with little regard for whatever is embodied and disembodied, they strive toward the Monas. [7]

Understood thus, we are, ontologically, emanations of and presence Being, and are a connexion to the cosmos - to other presencings of Being - through, in terms of epistemology, not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess arête, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character. Which Greek phrase expresses the ethics, the high personal standards, of the ancient paganus weltanschauung we have been discussing, and which standards naturally resulted in two things. First, in only a minority of individuals in a particular πόλις or civitas - community, tribe, clan, or society - manifesting such standards in their daily lives, with such a minority often forming a natural, and ruling, aristocracy. Second, that it was often a person who lived (and was prepared to die) by such high standards who, because of their character or based on a reputation established through valourous and noble deeds, became or was chosen as the leader or the chieftain of some community, tribe, clan, or society.

For the quintessence of such a weltanschauung, of the paganus ethos, is that ethics are presented in and by particular living individuals, not in some written

text whether philosophical or otherwise, not by some proposed schemata, and not in some revelation from some deity. Which paganus ethics, when evolved - combined with the paganus mysticism evident in the Corpus Hermeticum and the cultural pathei-mathos of the past two millennia [8] presenced through the insight of empathy - leads us to a modern paganus weltanschauung.

ooo

## Notes

[1] I follow the MSS, which have τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and εὐδαιμονία, all of which Nock omits.

[2] The English term 'wisdom' is not, given its modern connotations, an appropriate translation here of the Greek σοφία. Especially as the suggestion, as often elsewhere in the Corpus Hermeticum (qv. I: 29, et seq) is of a metaphysical principle or 'archetype', as is the case with Aion (αἰών) here, in tractate XI.

[3] Thus once again we encounter the limitations of denotata; of assigning particular words, terms or expressions to describe something metaphysical and which words, terms or expressions, over causal time, may acquire meanings which are not or may not be relevant to the original metaphysical context, as occurred here in respect of both αἰών and οὐσία, conventionally translated and thus (mis)understood as 'eternity' and 'essence'. Hence my transliteration of αἰών and translation of οὐσία by the unusual term quidditas, which is 11th/12th century Latin, from whence the word 'quiddity', a word originally from medieval scholasticism which was then used to mean the natural (primal) nature or form of some-thing, similar to the German prefix *ur* which passed into English usage in the 19th century.

[4] In respect of theos as the artisan-creator, qv. IV:1,

Ἐπειδὴ τὸν πάντα κόσμον ἐποίησεν ὁ δημιουργός, οὐ χερσὶν ἀλλὰ λόγῳ, ὥστε οὕτως ὑπολάμβανε ὡς τοῦ παρόντος καὶ αἰεὶ ὄντος καὶ πάντα ποιήσαντος καὶ ἑνὸς μόνου, τῇ δὲ αὐτοῦ θελήσει δημιουργήσαντος τὰ ὄντα

Because the artisan crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos, you should understand that Being as presential, as eternal, as having crafted all being, as One only, who by thesis formed all that is.

Regarding the above translation:

*artisan.* δημιουργόν. See Poemandres 9. The theme of an artisan-creator, and their artisements, is common to the third tractate (Ιερός Λόγος) as well. That the tractate begins by using the term artisan, rather than theos, is perhaps significant.

*that Being.* The conventional and grammatical interpretation is "you should understand him as..." although how such a human-type gender could be adduced from or manifest by how the 'body' of the artisan-creator is described in subsequent verses is an interesting and relevant metaphysical question. Can, or should, a 'body' that cannot be touched, that cannot be seen, that cannot be measured, that is not separable - οὐδὲ διαστατόν - and thus which is not conventionally 'human', be described as male? It is to suggest such metaphysical questions (and the limitations of ordinary language in describing and answering such metaphysical questions) that I have here departed from convention and used 'that Being' instead of 'him'. The term 'Being' also has the advantage that it avoids the gender bias implicit in translating θεός as 'god' given that 'god/God' implies a male entity.

There is also an interesting and perhaps relevant mention, in the second tractate of the Corpus, of the one, the being, who - like an artisan - constructs things: ὁ οὖν θεός <τὸ> ἀγαθόν, καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ὁ θεός. ἡ δὲ ἑτέρα προσηγορία ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ πατρός, πάλιν διὰ τὸ ποιητικὸν πάντων. πατὴρ γὰρ τὸ ποιεῖν. (Thus theos is the noble and the noble is theos, although another title is that of father because the artifex of all being. For it is of a father to construct.)

However, in terms of gender and Hellenic mythos and metaphysics, it is sometimes overlooked that Γαῖα, Earth Mother, in one of the Homeric hymns, Εἰς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων, is described as πρέσβιστος: the elder among beings, and the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ. Thus, while it might be of "a father to construct" it is "of a mother to bring forth life", to give birth to beings, including the gods themselves.

*presential.* πάρεμι. Presential - from the classical Latin praesentia - means "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or with an individual, and is thus more apposite here than the rather bland word 'present'. Cf. the use of 'presenced' in Ιερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia.

*One only.* ἐνὸς μόνου. A formulaic mystic phrase, implying uniqueness. Cf. ordinary usage in Plato, Crito 47, ἡ ἐνὸς μόνου ἐκείνου [...] ἐνὸς μόνου.

*thelesis.* θέλησις. Given what follows - τοῦτο γὰρ ἐστὶ τὸ σῶμα ἐκείνου, οὐχ ἄπτόν, οὐδὲ ὁρατόν, οὐδὲ μετρητόν, οὐδὲ διαστατόν - a transliteration to suggest something other than a human type 'will' or 'desire'; such as 'disposition'. That is, Being is predisposed to craft - to presence - being as beings: as immortals (deities), as mortals (humans) and otherwise, qv. Ιερός Λόγος, Poemandres 8 ff, and Poemandres 31: οὐ ἡ βουλὴ τελεῖται ἀπὸ τῶν ἰδίων δυνάμεων (whose purpose is accomplished by his own arts).

*formed*. As an artisan forms their artisements, and thus manifests their skill, their artistry, in what they produce. That is, the artisan-creator has formed, crafted, being (all existence) as beings.

[5] In the Corpus Hermeticum, and in ancient Greek culture in general, χρόνος is not 'time', which translation imposes medieval and modern concepts on this metaphysical principles such as a particular causal regularity quantifiable in terms of hours and minutes - measured by a mechanism such as a clock - and quantifiable by means of a set calendar which consists of regular days, weeks, months, and years.

Similarly, ὥρα (as for example in the Gospel of John, 5:39, ὥρα ἦν ὡς δεκάτη) when translated as 'hour' is misleading, since the term 'hour' now imputes a particular causal regularity quantifiable in terms of period lasting sixty minutes with twenty-four of these 'hours' marking the causal passing of one terran day. However, in the Roman governed milieu of that Gospel the day was divided into twenty-four durations or periods and which durations depended on the length of daylight (and thus the season) at the particular location in question, with there being twelve durations of daylight and twelve durations of night. Hence the 'tenth duration' mentioned in that verse - whether it be the tenth duration of the daylight hours or the tenth duration of the twenty-four - would not necessarily equate to what we would term 'ten o'clock' in the morning and certainly would not equate to a tenth 'hour' lasting sixty minutes. In addition, it depends on when the first duration was measured from: sunrise, or sunset, or from 'the mid-point of the night'. Which has led to debate among scholars as to whether or not John in this Gospel is, in respect of ὥρα, using Roman terminology for such periods, as well as to debates about whether the Roman durations were reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' or from sunrise. If reckoned from sunrise, then allowing for latitude and seasonal variation, this 'tenth duration' was between mid to late afternoon. If reckoned from 'the mid-point of the night' then this 'tenth duration' was mid to late morning. Where the Roman 'mid-point of the night' does not equate to the modern 'midnight' (as measured by a clock) but to half-way between the hours of darkness at a particular location.

Hence it is apposite to generally translate χρόνος as either 'duration' or 'season', since those terms are appropriate in relation to ancient Greek texts where the duration between, for example, the season of Summer and the season of Autumn was determined by the observations (the appearance in the night sky) of certain constellations and stars, and where the duration of a day varied from place to place and from season to season even if it was linearly measured out in a particular location by means of a Greek or Roman sundial.

[6] Qv. VIII, 5, ὁ ἄνθρωπος κατ' εἰκόνα τοῦ κόσμου γενόμενος. That is, as the Poemandres tractate describes in terms of seven spheres, our ψυχή (psyche) is a re-presentation, a presencing, of the cosmic order.

In respect of the seven spheres, and the melding of opposites, cf. XI:6-7,

θέασαι δὲ δι' ἐμοῦ τὸν κόσμον ὑποκείμενον τῇ σῇ ὥσει, τό τε κάλλος αὐτοῦ ἀκριβῶς κατανόησον, σῶμα μὲν ἀκήρατον καὶ οὐ παλαιότερον οὐδὲν ἔσται, διὰ παντὸς δὲ ἀκμαῖον καὶ νέον καὶ μᾶλλον ἀκμαιότερον.

Ἴδε καὶ τοὺς ὑποκειμένους ἑπτὰ κόσμους κεκοσμημένους τάξει αἰωνίῳ καὶ δρόμῳ διαφόρῳ τὸν αἰῶνα ἀναπληροῦντας, φωτὸς δὲ πάντα πλήρη, πῦρ δὲ οὐδαμοῦ· ἡ γὰρ φιλία καὶ ἡ σύγκρασις τῶν ἐναντίων καὶ τῶν ἀνομοίων φῶς γέγονε, καταλαμπόμενον ὑπὸ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνεργείας παντὸς ἀγαθοῦ γεννήτορος καὶ πάσης τάξεως ἄρχοντος καὶ ἡγεμόνος τῶν ἑπτὰ κόσμων·

Correctly consider and observe Kosmos as suggested by me and thus the beauty thereof, a body undecayable and nothing more eldern and yet always vigorous and fresh, even more now than before. Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits. Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos.

A similar melding of opposites is described by Heraclitus in terms of enantiodromia,

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7)

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

[7] Tractate IV:5. The Monas (μονάς) refers to The One, that is to the primal - the first - theos, the artisan who "crafted the complete cosmic order not by hand but through Logos."

In respect of the English word monas, qv. John Dee, *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568* - a text included (on page 334) in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum, Containing Severall Poeticall Pieces of our Famous English philosophers, who have written the Hermetique Mysteries in their owne Ancient Language*, published in London in 1652 - who wrote "our Monas trewe thus use by natures Law, both binde and lewse", and who also entitled one of his works *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564), in which work he described (in Theorem XVIII) a septenary system somewhat similar to that of the Poemandres tractate.

[8] Our human culture of pathei-mathos is evident in Studia Humanitatis and may be defined as the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

---

## **Epilogos**

### **A Modern Paganus Weltanschauung**

The paganus weltanschauung, ancestral to the lands of the West, that has emerged is one which, shorn of technical, Greek, and metaphysical terms, many may find familiar or already be intuitively aware of.

For it is a weltanschauung of we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin, the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies.

An awareness of all these connexions is awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous, for these connexions, being acausal, are affective: that is, we are inclined by our physis (whether we apprehend it or not) to have an influence on that which, or those whom, the connexion is to or from. For what we do or do not do, consciously or otherwise, affects or can affect the cosmos and thus the other living beings which exist in the cosmos, and it is a conscious awareness of connexions and acausal affects, with their causal consequences, which reason, perceiverance, and empathy make us - or can make us - aware of. Which awareness may incline us toward acting, and living, in a noble way, with what is noble known or experienced, discovered, through and because of (i) the personal virtue of honour, evident as honour is in fairness, manners and a balanced demeanour, and (ii) the wordless knowing of empathy, manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance.

For Being is also, and importantly, presenced - manifest to us, as mortals possessed of reason, empathy, and perceiverance - through certain types of individuals and thus through the particular ways of living that nurture or



encourage such individuals. These types of individuals are those who have empathy and who live and if necessary die by honour and thus who have nobility of character, with such character innate, or developed through *pathei-mathos*, or formed through a particular type of education, or through proximity to and/or admiration of those whose lives and deeds have revealed them to have such nobility of character. For it is the known living and the known deeds of individuals which reveal and/or which are the genesis of such noble character.

Such a developed *paganus weltanschauung* - in its ethos and its ontology, ethics, and epistemology, and thus with its virtues of personal honour and empathy combined with a respect for the numinous - is quite different from Christianity and other revealed religions, and certainly does, in its noble simplicity and practicality, seem to be more human in *physis*, more balanced, and could well be more productive of a healthy personal *ψυχή*, than Christianity and other revealed religions.

Such a modern *paganus weltanschauung* may also be a means to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western *émigré* lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos, for them to thus become, or return to being, a living, dwelling, part - a connexion between the past and the future - of what is still a living, and evolving, culture. Perhaps the future of that culture depends on whether sufficient individuals can live by the high personal standards of such a modern *paganus weltanschauung*.

---

## Appendix

### From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος

#### Pathei-Mathos

The Greek term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be translated as *learning from adversary*, and thus interpreted as implying that *wisdom arises from (personal) suffering* and that *personal experience is the genesis of true learning*.

However, this term should be understood in context [1], for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and this new law – this new guidance laid down for mortals – is pathei-mathos. Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous authority [2] – that is, the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often more valuable than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any impersonal words one might read in some book.

In many ways this is an enlightened – a very human – view, and is rather in contrast to the faith and revelation-centred view of revealed religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. In the former, it is the personal experience of learning from, and dealing with, personal suffering and adversity, that is paramount and which possesses authority; in the latter, it is faith that some written work or works is or are a sacred revelation from the supreme deity one believes in which is paramount, combined with a belief that this supreme deity has appointed or authorized some mortal being or beings, or some Institution, as their earthly representative, and who thus possess authority.

The Aeschylan view is that learning, and thus wisdom, arises from within us, by virtue of that which afflicts us (and which afflictions could well be the from the gods/Nature or from some supra-personal source) and from our own, direct, personal, practical, experience. The Aeschylan view – what we might call the way of pathei-mathos – can thus be considered to be numinous – that is, some-thing which lives, which is part of our own living, grounded in the personal reality of our immediacy of living, and thus is somewhat different from the religious attitude which asserts that wisdom, and indeed truth, can be found in revelation from some supreme deity, or imparted to or taught to us by someone in some position of authority, or discovered in or learnt from something 'dead', such as a book written by someone else.

## **Philosophy, Logic, and Politics**

In essence, conventional philosophy seeks to find certain and particular causes for what exists, and to express certain general principles, by and through which knowledge and understanding of Reality, and existence, and thus wisdom, may be said to be obtained.

But, in a quite real way, conventional philosophy is founded upon the religious notion, the religious approach to wisdom mentioned above, for conventional philosophy is based upon abstractions [3]; upon abstract or idealized categories and ideas by and through which it is claimed we can acquire a knowing of what such categories and ideas are said to represent. All conventional philosophy has this approach - this ideation - by its very nature as an interior process of reflexion, by human beings, upon Reality and existence, and a process which requires the use of ideation and words and/or terms, and thence their collocation, to present to other human beings the result or results of such reflexion. Such ideation, such abstraction, is inherent in the finding of certain particular causes and general principles.

Exterior to this interior process, this ideation, there is logic, which may be defined as the dispassionate examination of the collocation or collocations of words and/or terms (or symbols) which relate, or which are said to relate, to what is correct (valid, true) or incorrect (invalid, false) and which collocation or collocations are considered to be or which are regarded as being, by their proponents, as representative of, or actually being, knowledge or a type of or a guide to knowing.

For logic, what is or what may be represented by such collocations (the content) is fundamentally irrelevant. What is relevant - what determines the logical validity of any any examined collocations - is the natural unfolding, or the form, behind and beyond all ideation.

Logic thus regards abstractions and ideas as irrelevant, as no guarantee of truth, and thus as no sure guide to a genuine knowing and to wisdom itself, and thus logic can be considered as a valid means whereby truth can be ascertained [4].

It may be objected, however, that the use of logic in philosophy makes philosophy a reasonable and a valid guide to Reality and thence to truth. However, what conventional philosophy does and has done is apply logic to theories that are derived from some abstraction or other, which application is basically irrelevant if the basal abstractions themselves are flawed. Furthermore, all such abstractions are in and of themselves flawed because they are, by their very nature, abstractions, divorced as they are from the numinous, from that which lives, and which unfolds in that natural way which Φύσις does. [5]

Thus, one can conclude that logic, rather than conventional philosophy, is a more valid means to truth and thence to knowledge, than the speculations and ideations of conventional philosophy.

Like philosophy, politics is founded upon abstractions – upon the religious way to knowledge and truth – but takes, and has taken, abstractionism much further, through the manufacture of ideologies, which are specific collocations of dogmatic abstractions.

In addition, politics is often or mostly based upon an appeal to the emotions, where individuals allow themselves to be persuaded by others (often through rhetoric or because of propaganda) and/or suspend their own judgement in favour of accepting that of someone else (some leader) or of some political organization or movement. That is, there is an identification with certain abstract political views, or some ideology, or some political organization or leader, in place of or instead of one's own judgement and in place of or instead of one's own unique, individual, identity deriving from one's own pathei-mathos.

In particular, there is or there comes to be, an immoral, an un-numinous, judgement of (and often a dislike or even hatred of) others based on what is perceived to be their political views, allegiance, or opinions, so that, for instance, a person is viewed not as an individual human being, but as an abstraction: as a Conservative, or as a fascist, or as a liberal, or as a Communist, and so on. This is same type of inhuman, immoral, prejudice that conventional religion often still produces and most certainly has produced, for millennia, and which ethnic, or racial, abstractions certainly still produce and encourage.

### **The Pathei-Mathos of Experimental Science**

In contrast to philosophy, experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal, observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation, with the important and necessary proviso, beautifully expressed by Isaac Newton, in his *Principia*, that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

The *raison d'être* of experimental science – unlike philosophy, religion, and politics – is knowledge acquired in a personal, direct, manner, without the intervention of abstractions, and this, as is the knowledge obtained by pathei-mathos, is numinous: a re-presentation, *sans* abstractions, which is living, possessed of Life, and a practical guide to what actually is real, as opposed to

the assumed, the imaginary, the abstract un-living reality that conventional philosophy, religion and politics present to us.

Hence, experimental science may be said to complement and extend – as a guide to Reality, knowledge and wisdom – the personal way of pathei-mathos.

The essential difference between experimental science and philosophy is that of abstractions: for philosophy, unobservable (theoretical) abstractions are the beginning of, and indeed the necessary and required basis of, our enquiry into the nature of Reality, and existence, and meaning; whereas for experimental science such abstractions, or theories, which may arise or which are conjectured, do so only on the basis of direct observation, are only and ever conjectural, temporary, subject to falsification by further practical observations, and are always rational, that is subject to logic (the rules of reasoning).

In addition, in philosophy, authority is the authority of some individual or individuals recognized by others for their theoretical contributions(s), so that, for instance, a scholarly paper in philosophy is of necessity replete with what other philosophers have said or written or thought or conjectured. For experimental science, authority lies in the evidence of observations and the application of logic.

### **Toward A Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos**

We may suggest a 'numinous way', a new philosophy – the philosophy of πάθει μάθος – which is that of the way of a personal pathei-mathos combined with the way of experimental science, where we obtain knowledge about Reality, and may move toward certain truths about ourselves and existence, through direct practical, scientific observation of the phenomenal world, through the learning that derives from pathei-mathos, through the application of logic, and through an appreciation of the knowledge that the natural faculty of empathy provides, and which empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials [6] of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Such a new philosophy is, or could be considered to be, a guide to what we understand as σοφός.

David Myatt  
2010  
(Revised 2015)

---

### *Footnotes:*

[1]

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων  
τεύζεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:

ὄν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδῶ-  
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος  
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,  
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;  
Of he who guided mortals to reason,  
Who laid down that this possesses authority:  
*Learning from adversity.*

Aeschylus: *Agamemnon*, 174-183

In many ways, *The Oresteia* represents the new wisdom that *pathei-mathos* can guide us toward; that the old cycle of tragedy and suffering can be escaped from by us appreciating, and acting upon, the understanding, the insight, that *pathei-mathos* provides.

[2] The numinous is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις. What manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets.

[3] Abstraction(ism) can be philosophically defined as the implementation, the practical application, of ὕβρις. An abstraction has its genesis in denotata, in naming 'a thing' which is considered to be separate, distinct, and representative of, or belonging to, some ideal 'form' or to some category of such named 'things'.

In respect of the numinous, and recalling *The Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, the *Antigone* and the *Oedipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, we could say that the numinous is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις – to not overstep the due limits.

As Sophocles wrote in *Oedipus Tyrannus*:

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:  
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,  
ἃ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,  
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'  
αἶψος ἀπότομον ὥρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν,  
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ  
χρῆται

"Insolence plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use..." (vv.872ff)

[4] In many ways, the λόγος that is logical reasoning [cf. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 583, εἰ διδοίης γ' ὥς ἐγὼ σαυτῷ λόγον] could be considered to be the opposite of an idea, of an abstraction,

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ  
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists – human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. [Heraclitus, fragment 1]

[5] Cf. Aristotle Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a

ἐκ δὲ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

"Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For physis is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is."

[6] These Aristotelian essentials are:

- (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
  - (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties; that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
  - (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
  - (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.
-

cc 2017 David W Myatt  
Second Edition  
All translations by DW Myatt

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license  
and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

---







**Tu Es Diaboli Ianua**

**Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous**

**David Myatt**

ooo

## **Contents**

- Exordium
  - Part I. The Johannine Weltanschauung And The Numinous
  - Part II. A Paganus Apprehension
  - Part III. Numinous Metaphysics
  - Appendix I. Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song
  - Appendix II. A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John
  - Appendix III. The Human Culture Of Pathei-Mathos
-

## Exordium

Given that the religion termed Christianity has, for over six centuries, been influential in respect of the ethos and spirituality of the culture of the West - often to the extent of having been described as manifesting that ethos and that spirituality - one of the metaphysical questions I have sought to answer over the past forty years is whether that religion is, given our thousands of years old human culture of *pathei-mathos*, a suitable presencing of the numinous. If it is not, then could that religion be reformed, by developing a Johannine *Weltanschauung* given that the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - arguably presents a somewhat different perspective on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth than the three other synoptic Gospels. Would such a reformation be a suitable presencing of the numinous, and if not, then what non-Christian alternatives - such as a *paganus metaphysics* - exist, and what is the foundation of such an alternative?

This essay presents my answers to such questions and thus compliments my book *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. As in that book, I have made extensive use of my translations of certain classical authors and of various hermetic texts as well as the Gospel of John, and given that those translations are currently quite accessible I have not except on a few occasions explained my interpretations of certain Greek or Latin terms since those interpretations are explained in the associated commentaries.

As noted elsewhere, I prefer the term *paganus* - a transliteration of the classical Latin, denoting as it does connection to Nature, to the natural, more rural, world - in preference to 'pagan' since *paganus* is, in my view and in respect of the Greco-Roman ethos, more accurate given what the term 'pagan' now often denotes.

The title of the essay, *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* - "You Are The Nexion Of The Deofel", literally, "You are nexion Diabolos " - is taken from Tertullian's *De Monogamia*, written at the beginning of the second century AD.

David Myatt  
Winter Solstice 2017

## **I. The Johannine Weltanschauung And The Numinous**

### **The Numinous**

The religion [1] of Christianity is founded on, and regarded as being manifest in, the Greek texts that have become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καινή Διαθήκη, and the Greek texts known as the Septuagint (LXX, The Old Testament) with such texts being regarded as divinely inspired and thus, in the words of Tertullian, Divinum Instrumentum, [2] [3] the divine apparatus - the instrument - for understanding divine decree.

Writing in the early years of the Christian religion, Tertullian expressed the essence of the Christian ethos when he wrote:

Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aequae ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum [...] quam Christus non dissolvit, sed adimplevit. [4]

Given the venerable examples of the ancient ones, consider the venerable apparatus of scriptural Law [...] which Christ did not nullify, but fulfilled.

Which reliance on such written words from 'the ancient ones' (the Prophets) and from the authors of the New Testament, and which understanding of those words as divinely inspired and thus as the definitive guide to what is sacred and what is profane, led not only to views such as the following but also to such views becoming a part of the Christian ethos and a part of Christian praxis for well over a thousand years:

Viuit sententia Dei super sexum istum in hoc saeculo: uiuat et reatus necesse est. Tu es diaboli ianua; tu es arboris illius resignatrix; tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix; tu es quae eum suasisti, quem diabolus aggredi non ualuit; tu imaginem Dei, hominem, tam facile elisisti; propter tuum meritum, id est mortem, etiam filius Dei mori habuit. [5]

The judgement of God on your gender is alive in this era, necessitating that you live with your offence. You are The Nexion of The Deofel. You are The Resignatrix of The Tree. You are The Archetypal Desertrix of Divine Decree. You are she who incited he

whom The Deofel could not attack. You effortlessly broke the representation of God: a man. And it is because of you - because of your loss - that even the Son of God had to die. [6]

Which rather harsh indictment of half of humanity, with its accusations, its sternness, and its apparent lack of empathy, inclines one to enquire into the nature of the numinous and thus into how we, as individuals and sans preconceptions, can distinguish the 'sacred' from the 'profane'.

My, admittedly fallible, understanding of the numinous is that it is a presencing, and an apprehension by us, of the divine, of the sacred. Which apprehension is of our physis [7] as human beings, and thus of our relation to other human beings, to other living beings, and to the Cosmos itself. An apprehension - a perceivment - that enables a supra-personal 'cosmic' perspective and which perspective can incline us as individuals toward humility and thus comprehend our mortality and our fallible nature. In effect, this apprehension is the genesis of mysticism since it is a personal intuitive insight about the nature of Reality where there is a wordless - and empathic, a contemplative - apprehension of there existing certain truths which transcend the temporal, the causal, and thus which are beyond the denotatum of words, categories, dogma, ideology, and thus beyond named ideas.

### **The Johannine Weltanschauung**

Would a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John - τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον - be different from, more numinous than, the Christianity derived from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and the other texts included in what has become known as the Canonical New Testament, Καὶνὴ Διαθήκη? A Johannine Christianity where the Greek texts known as LXX, the Old Testament, were not regarded as 'the Word of God' - as divinely inspired and canonical - but rather as providing some historical background to the old, superseded, logos of Mosaic law and of 'the Prophets'. Would such a Johannine Christianity be a Weltanschauung - a particular and individual apprehension or interpretation of Reality - rather than a religion with all that a religion implies in terms of hierarchy and dogma? With the contrast being, in the words of Tertullian, *Post vetera exempla originalium personarum aequae ad vetera transeamus instrumenta legalium scripturarum*.

What emerges from my reading of τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον [8] is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed. This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is or has doctrinally been

considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John, such as the following two, one of which involves the Greek word πιστεύω, and which word is perhaps a relevant hermeneutical example. The conventional interpretation of meaning, in respect of New Testament texts, is 'believe', 'have faith in', so that John 3:16 is interpreted along the following lines:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (King James Bible)

Similarly in respect of other verses where πιστεύω occurs, so that the impression is of the necessity of believing, of having or acquiring faith.

Yet, and in regard to the aforementioned verse, if one interprets that particular (and another) Greek word in a more Hellenistic – a more Greek – way, then one has:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting.

Not only is this personal, direct – as in personally trusting someone as opposed to a 'blind believing' – but there are no prior hermeneutic assumptions about 'God', derived as such assumptions are from over two thousand years of scriptural exegesis and preaching.

#### **Example One. Chapter Three, 16-21**

DWM:

Theos so loved the world that he offered up his only begotten son so that all those trusting in him would not perish but might have life everlasting. For Theos did not dispatch his son to the world to condemn the world, but rather that the world might be rescued through him. Whosoever trusts in him is not condemned while whomsoever does not trust is condemned for he has not trusted in the Nomen of the only begotten son of Theos.

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. For anyone who does what is mean dislikes the Phaos and does not come near the Phaos lest their deeds be exposed. But whomsoever practices disclosure goes to the Phaos so that their deeds might be manifest as having been done through Theos. [9]

King James Bible:



God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

**Example Two. Chapter Five, 1-16**

DWM:

Following this, there was a Judaeen feast and Jesus went to Jerusalem. And there is in Jerusalem by the place of the sheep a pool, named in the language of the Hebrews as Bethesda, which has five colonnades in which were a large number of the infirm – the blind, the limping, the withered – awaiting a change in the water since on occasion an Envoy of Theos descended into the pool, stirring the water, and whomsoever after that stirring of the water was first to enter became complete, the burden of their affliction removed.

And there was a man there who for eight and thirty years had been infirm. Jesus, seeing him lying there and knowing of that lengthy duration, said to him: "Do you seek to be complete?"

The infirm one replied: "Sir, I do not have someone who when the water is stirred could place me in that pool, and, when I go, someone else has descended before me."

Jesus said to him: "Arise. Take your bedroll, and walk."

And, directly, the man became complete, took up his bedroll and walked around. And it was the day of the Sabbath.

Thus did the Judaeans say to the one who had been treated: "It is the Sabbath and it is not permitted for you to carry your bedroll."

To them he answered: "It was he who made me complete who said for me to take my bedroll and to walk around."

So they asked him: "Who is the man who said for you to take the bedroll and walk?"

But the healed one did not know, for there was a crowd there with Jesus having betaken himself away.

Following this, Jesus discovered him in the temple and said to him: "Behold, you are complete. No more missteps, lest something worse befalls you."

The man then went away and informed the Judaeans that it was Jesus who had made him complete, and thus did the Judaeans harass Jesus because he was doing such things on the Sabbath. [10][11]

King James Bible:

After this there was a feast of the Jews; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.

The Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the sabbath day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee. The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, which had made him whole.

And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath day.

## Summary

The first example seems to me to be revealing of the personal nature of the 'way of Jesus of Nazareth' – of a personal trust in a particular person, in this instance a trust in Jesus because of how he and his life are recounted by the Evangelist – contrasting with a rather impersonal demand to believe, to have faith, based on doctrine as codified by someone else or by some organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy.

The second example seems to me to be revealing of the contrast between the then organized supra-personal religion of the Judaeans – with its doctrinal forbiddance, sometimes on pain of death, of certain personal deeds – and the empathy and compassion of an individual, as evident in Jesus in the immediacy of the moment healing a long-suffering infirm man and bidding him to take up and carry his bedroll, undoubtedly aware as Jesus was that he was doing and inciting what was forbidden because for him empathy and compassion were more important than some established doctrine.

Is this contrast between what seems to be a particular dogmatism, a particular religious (hubriatic) intolerance by the Judaeans, and an individual being empathic and compassionate in the immediacy of the moment, still relevant today? Personally, I do believe it is, leading me to conclude that τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην εὐαγγέλιον – The Gospel According To John – contains certain truths not only about our physis as human beings but also about our relation to Being, to the divine, to the numinous. For, as described in tractate III of the Corpus Hermeticum,

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις [...] τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἢ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις φύσει ἀνανεομένη· ἐν γὰρ τῷ θείῳ καὶ ἡ φύσις καθέστηκεν.

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mexion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis, for Physis is presenced in the divine. [12]

## **II. A Paganus Apprehension**

The particular truths revealed by the Gospel of John - that is, of a more personal way to apprehend the divine through an individual trust in a particular living person, the person of Jesus - are however dependant on three things. First, on accepting the veracity of a particular written text. Second, on an acceptance that certain signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and his Ascension - indicate that he is, as the Evangelist narrates, the Son of Theos and thus can gift mortals with life everlasting. Third, that the person in question - Jesus - is alive and thus could be personally known and trusted on the basis of such a personal knowing.

If one accepts that the narration is a reasonably accurate portrayal of the life of a particular individual then one might be inclined to appreciate that Jesus - judged by our thousands of years old human culture of *pathei-mathos* [13] - presenced a certain wisdom, a certain understanding of the divine and of our human physis, manifest for example in compassion and in eschewing contemporary religious restrictions dogmatically imposed upon individuals.

Yet for we who live centuries after the narrated death of Jesus to extend this appreciation of a once living mortal to an acceptance of him as the Son of God, able thus to gift us with life everlasting because he is not a mere mortal, not dead, but rather a living, a resurrected, an immortal divinity, is not an act of trust based on a personal knowing of a living mortal but rather is an act of faith, a spiritual act of belief.

Thus a Christianity based only on the Gospel According to John would not, in its essence and in my fallible opinion, be very different from the Christianity derived from the Canonical New Testament, since the Gospel According to John would become *Divinum Instrumentum*, the divine apparatus for understanding divine decree - and become so regardless of whether or not such an apparatus included The Old Testament - with the attendant development of dogma and exegesis and thence the subsequent schisms based on the various interpretations suggested by such exegesis.

For the problem is - or so it seems to me - in impersonal written texts. Or, more precisely, in denotatum, and thus in assigning terms - in using words - to describe an apprehension of the numinous. Which leads us to the fundamental difference between a religious apprehension of the numinous - based on received and venerated texts, on exegesis - and the *paganus* apprehension of the numinous as manifest in Greco-Roman culture, based as it is on an

individual, and an intuitive, empathic and thus wordless, apprehension of the numinous. Which paganism will be examined for two reasons. Firstly, because it is manifest in a multiplicity of primary sources - from Homer to Hesiod to Cicero and beyond - and secondly because Greco-Roman culture is inextricably bound to the culture of the West and formed the basis for the European Renaissance that emerged in the 14th century, one aspect of which was a widespread appreciation of classical Art, of classical literature, and of texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum.

The Greco-Roman paganus apprehension is presented for us in mythoi - myths and legends - none of which were regarded as embodying a religious revelation from an omnipotent deity to his 'chosen people' and none of which embodied divine commands - divine laws - which mortals were commanded to obey on pain of punishment. Instead, these myths and legends - described by Homer, by Hesiod, and dramatised by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others - were instructive examples of how the gods interacted with other divinities and with mortals, and how mortals should interact among themselves and with the gods.

Thus in Greek mythoi the divine chieftain, Zeus, in an instructive example of the ancient Greek principle of δημοκρατία, is depicted by Homer in Book I, vv. 76-77 of The Odyssey as saying to the goddess Athena that there will a gathering of the gods in order to discuss and consider the matter of the return of Odysseus to his home, ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἡμεῖς οἶδε περιφραζώμεθα πάντες νόστον.

Which mention of Athena illustrates two of the many fundamental differences between classical paganism and the monotheism of Christianity accepting as that monotheism does the beliefs of the ancient Hebrews as mentioned in the Gospel of John and as described in the Old Testament. A first difference is how some deities - such as Pallas Athena - would shapeshift and assume various forms, including human form, in order to directly interact with mortals, with the goddess Athena in the Odyssey assuming the form of a mortal man. A second difference is a polytheism which includes many female deities, with such female deities often considered by mortals as friends and companions and invoked for assistance, a personal, an intimate, apprehension beautifully expressed by Sappho:

Ποικιλόθρον' ἀθάνατ' Ἀφροδιτα,  
παῖ Δίος, δολόπλοκε, λίσσομαί σε  
μή μ' ἄσαισι μήτ' ὀνύiaiσι δάμνα,  
πότνια, θῦμον

ἀλλὰ τυίδ' ἔλθ', αἵποτα κατέρωτα  
τᾶς ἔμας αὐδωσ αἴοισα πήλγι  
ἔκλυες πάτρος δὲ δόμον λίποισα  
χρύσιον ἦλθες

ἄρμ' ὑποζεύξαια, κάλοι δέ σ' ἄγον

ῥκεες στροϋθοι περὶ γᾶς μελαίνας  
πύκνα δινεϋντες πτέρ' ἀπ' ὠράνω  
αἴθερος διὰ μέσσω

αἶψα δ' ἐχίκοντο, σὺ δ', ῥ μάσαιρα  
μειδιάσαις' ἀθάνατῳ προσώπῳ,  
ἥρ' ὅττι δηϋτε πέπονθα κῶττι  
δηγτε κάλημι

κῶττι μοι μάλιστα θέλω γένεσθαι  
μαινόλα θύμῳ, τίνα δηϋτε πείθω  
μαῖς ἄγην ἐς σὰν φιλότατα τίς τ, ῥ  
Πσάπφ', ἀδίκηει

καὶ γάρ αἰ φεύγει, ταχέως διώξει,  
αἰ δὲ δῶρα μὴ δέκετ ἀλλά δώσει,  
αἰ δὲ μὴ φίλει ταχέως φιλήσει,  
κῶκ ἐθέλοισα

ἔλθε μοι καὶ νῦν, χαλεπᾶν δὲ λῦσον  
ἐκ μερίμναν ὅσσα δέ μοι τέλεσσαι  
θῦμος ἱμέρρει τέλεσον, σὺ δ' αὐτὰ  
σύμμαχος ἔσσο.

Deathless Aphrodite – Daughter of Zeus and maker of snares -  
On your florid throne, hear me!  
My lady, do not subdue my heart by anguish and pain  
But come to me as when before  
You heard my distant cry, and listened:  
Leaving, with your golden chariot yoked, your father's house  
To move beautiful sparrows swift with a whirling of wings  
As from heaven you came to this dark earth through middle air  
And so swiftly arrived.

Then you my goddess with your immortal lips smiling  
Would ask what now afflicts me, why again  
I am calling and what now I with my restive heart  
Desired:

Whom now shall I beguile  
To bring you to her love?  
Who now injures you, Sappho?  
For if she flees, soon shall she chase  
And, rejecting gifts, soon shall she give.  
If she does not love you, she shall do so soon  
Whatsoever is her will.

Come to me now to end this consuming pain  
Bringing what my heart desires to be brought:  
Be yourself my ally in this fight.

Female deities could, like Athena, intervene in the life of mortals and so alter their fate even to the extent of guiding them toward their death. For it is not Zeus alone who - as a monotheistic omnipotent deity does - decides the fate of mortals, but also other gods, as described for instance by Homer:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ  
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν:  
πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,  
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,  
ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.  
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:  
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,  
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἥελίοιο  
ἥσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ

The Muse shall tell of the many adventures of that man of the many stratagems  
Who, after the pillage of that hallowed citadel at Troy,  
Saw the towns of many a people and experienced their ways:  
He whose vigour, at sea, was weakened by many afflictions  
As he strove to win life for himself and return his comrades to their homes.  
But not even he, for all this yearning, could save those comrades  
For they were destroyed by their own immature foolishness  
Having devoured the cattle of Helios, that son of Hyperion,  
Who plucked from them the day of their returning. (Odyssey, Book I, v. 1-9)

In addition, and importantly, Γαῖα, Earth Mother, is described in the Homeric hymn Εἰς Γῆν Μητέρα Πάντων as πρέσβιστος, the elder among beings, the mother of the gods, θεῶν μήτηρ, who nourishes all living beings:

γαῖαν παμμήτειραν αἰέσομαι ἠυθέμεθλον  
πρεσβίστην ἥ φέρβει ἐπὶ χθονὶ πάνθ' ὅπόσ' ἐστίν

Even in the later mythoi associated with a monadic 'theos as creator' there is no divine law necessitating obedience and no humiliating fear of retribution by an omnipotent deity. Instead, as I noted in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* in reference to tractate XI:3 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

"the sophia, the sapientia, of theos is presenced not in the 'word of God' (scriptures) but in the personal Greek virtues of τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, and in the metaphysical principle denoted by the term αἰών."

Which leads to the understanding that in classical paganism mortals are

considered to be connected to the cosmos, to the divine, to the numinous, through

"not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess arête, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κἀγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner."  
[14]

One such example is recounted by Xenophon:

ἐκεῖνός γε μὴν ὑμῶν οὐποτ' ἔληγεν ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς οἶοιτο οὐδὲν ἥττον ὁσίοις ἔργοις ἢ ἀγνοῖς ἱεροῖς ἡδεσθαι ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ ὁπότε εὐτυχοίη οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ὑπερεφρόνει ἀλλὰ θεοῖς χάριν ἡδεῖ καὶ θαρρῶν πλείονα ἔθυεν ἢ ὀκνῶν ἡῤῃχετο εἴθιστο δὲ φοβούμενος μὲν ἱλαρὸς φαίνεσθαι εὐτυχῶν δὲ πρᾶος εἶναι [Agesilaus, 11.2]

this person, whom I praise, never ceased to believe that the gods delight in respectful deeds just as much as in consecrated temples, and, when blessed with success, he was never prideful but rather gave thanks to the gods. He also made more offerings to them when he was confident than supplications when he felt hesitant, and, in appearance, it was his habit to be cheerful when doubtful and mild-mannered when successful.

Those who conduct themselves in a refined, a gentlemanly or lady-like, manner are those who seek to avoid committing the error of hubris, ὕβρις, since they understand that hubris invites the attention of the Fates (Μοῖραι) and their ever heedful furies - Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες - exemplifying as the female Fates and their Furies do an aspect of how mortals are connected to the cosmos, which cosmos is considered as living, as in Περὶ Εἰμαρμένης, attributed to Plutarch - τὸ φύσει διοικεῖσθαι τόνδε τὸν κόσμον σύμπνουν καὶ συμπαθῇ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ ὄντα (574e) - where the Kosmos is described as συμπαθῇ with itself and mutually breathing, σύμπνους.

In the classical mysticism described in tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [15], the pupil (τέκνον, son) is advised by his teacher (πάτερ, father) toward contemplation and thus toward a personal, an intimate, understanding of παλιγγενεσία, Palingenesis:

ἐπίσπασαι εἰς ἑαυτόν, καὶ ἐλεύσεται· θέλησον, καὶ γίνεται· κατάργησον τοῦ σώματος τὰς αἰσθήσεις, καὶ ἔσται ἡ γένεσις τῆς θεότητος· καθαροὶ σεαυτὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀλόγων τῆς ὕλης τιμωριῶν.

Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὧ πάτερ; Οὐκ ὀλίγους, ὧ τέκνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ φοβεροὺς καὶ πολλοὺς. Ἀγνοῶ, ὧ πάτερ. Μία αὕτη, ὧ τέκνον, τιμωρία ἢ ἄγνοια· δευτέρα λύπη· τρίτη ἀκρασία· τετάρτη ἐπιθυμία· πέμπτη ἀδικία· ἕκτη πλεονεξία· ἑβδόμη ἀπάτη·



ὀγδόη φθόνος· ἐνάτη δόλος· δεκάτη ὀργή· ἐνδεκάτη προπέτεια·

δωδεκάτη κακία· εἰσὶ δὲ αὗται τὸν ἀριθμὸν δώδεκα· ὑπὸ δὲ ταύτας πλείονες ἄλλαι, ὧ τέκνον, διὰ τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου τοῦ σώματος αἰσθητικῶς πάσχειν ἀναγκάζουσι τὸν ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρωπον· ἀφίστανται δὲ αὗται, οὐκ ἀθρώως, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἐλεηθέντος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ οὕτω συνίσταται ὁ τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τρόπος καὶ λόγος.

λοιπὸν σιώπησον, ὦ τέκνον, καὶ εὐφήμησον καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐ καταπαύσει τὸ ἔλεος εἰς ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ· χαῖρε λοιπὸν, ὦ τέκνον, ἀνακαθαιρόμενος ταῖς τοῦ θεοῦ δυνάμεσιν, εἰς συνάρθρωσιν τοῦ Λόγου. ἦλθεν ἡμῖν γνῶσις θεοῦ· ταύτης ἐλθούσης, ὦ τέκνον, ἐξηλάθη ἡ ἄγνοια. ἦλθεν ἡμῖν γνῶσις χαρᾶς· παραγεννομένης ταύτης, ὦ τέκνον, ἡ λύπη φεύζεται εἰς τοὺς χωροῦντας αὐτήν.

δύναμιν καλῶ ἐπὶ χαρᾷ τὴν ἐν κράτειαν· ὦ δύναμις ἡδίστη, προσλάβωμεν, ὦ τέκνον, αὐτὴν ἀσμενέστατα· πῶς ἅμα τῷ παραγενέσθαι ἀπώσατο τὴν ἀκρασίαν; τετάρτην δὲ νῦν καλῶ καρτερίαν, τὴν κατὰ τῆς ἐπιθυμίας δύναμιν. ὁ βαθμὸς οὗτος, ὦ τέκνον, δικαιοσύνης ἐστὶν ἔδρασμα· χωρὶς γὰρ κρίσεως ἴδε πῶς τὴν ἀδικίαν ἐξήλασεν· ἐδικαιώθημεν, ὦ τέκνον, ἀδικίας ἀποῦσης.

ἕκτην δύναμιν καλῶ εἰς ἡμᾶς, τὴν κατὰ τῆς πλεονεξίας, κοινωνίαν. ἀποστάσης δὲ ἔτι καλῶ τὴν ἀλήθειαν καὶ φεύγει ἀπάτη, ἀλήθεια παραγίνεται ἴδε πῶς τὸ ἀγαθὸν πεπλήρωται, ὦ τέκνον, παραγινομένης τῆς ἀληθείας· φθόνος γὰρ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀπέστη· τῇ δὲ ἀληθείᾳ καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἐπεγένετο, ἅμα ζωῇ καὶ φωτί, καὶ οὐκέτι ἐπῆλθεν οὐδεμία τοῦ σκότους τιμωρία, ἀλλ' ἐξέπτησαν νικηθεῖσαι ροίζω.

ἔγνωκας, ὦ τέκνον, τῆς παλιγγενεσίας τὸν τρόπον· τῆς δεκάδος παραγινομένης, ὦ τέκνον, συνετέθη νοερὰ γενέσις καὶ τὴν δωδεκάδα ἐξελαύνει καὶ ἐθεώθημεν τῇ γενέσει· ὅστις οὖν ἔτυχεν κατὰ τὸ ἔλεος τῆς κατὰ θεὸν γενέσεως, τὴν σωματικὴν αἴσθησιν καταλιπὼν, ἑαυτὸν γνωρίζει ἐκ τούτων συνιστάμενον καὶ εὐφραίνεται

Ἀκλινὴς γενόμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, ὦ πάτερ, φαντάζομαι, οὐχ ὁράσει ὀφθαλμῶν ἀλλὰ τῇ διὰ δυνάμεων νοητικῇ ἐνεργείᾳ. ἐν οὐρανῷ εἰμι, ἐν γῇ, ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν ἀέρι· ἐν ζώοις εἰμί, ἐν φυτοῖς· ἐν γαστρί, πρὸ γαστροῦ, μετὰ γαστέρα, πανταχοῦ.

Tractate XIII, 7-11

Go within: and an arriving. Intend: and an engendering. Let physical perceptibility rest, and divinity will be brought-into-being. Refine yourself, away from the brutish Alastoras of Materies. [16]

Alastoras are within me, then, father?

Not just a few, my son, but many and terrifying.

I do not apprehend them, father.

My son, one Vengeress is Unknowing; the second, Grief. The third, Unrestraint; the fourth, Lascivity. The fifth, Unfairness; the sixth, Coveter. The seventh, Deceit; the eighth, Envy. The ninth, Treachery; the tenth, Wroth. The eleventh, Temerity; the twelfth, Putridity.

In number, these are twelve but below them are numerous others who, my son, compel the inner mortal - bodily incarcerated - to suffer because of perceptibility. But they absent themselves - although not all at once - from those to whom theos is generous, which is what the Way and Logos of Palingenesis consists of.

Henceforward, speak quietly, my son, and keep this secret. For thus may the generosity of theos toward us continue.

Henceforward, my son, be pleased, having refinement through the crafts of theos to thus comprehend the Logos.

My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Theos. On arrival: Unknowing is banished. My son, to us: arrivance of Knowledge of Delightfulness: on arriving, Grief runs away to those who have the room.

The influence invoked following Delightfulness is Self-Restraint: a most pleasant influence. Let us, my son, readily welcome her: arriving, she immediately pushes Unrestraint aside.

The fourth invoked is Perseverance who is influxious against Lascivity. Which Grade, my son, is the foundation of Ancestral Custom: observe how without any deliberation Unfairness was cast out. My son, we are vindicated since Unfairness has departed.

The sixth influence invoked for us - against Coveter - is community. With that departed, the next invocation: Actualis, and thus - with Actualis presenced - does Deceit run away. Observe, my son, how with Actualis presenced and Envy absent, the noble has been returned. For, following Actualis, there is the noble, together with Life and Phaos.

No more does the retribution of Skotos supervene, for, vanquished, they whirlingly rush away.

Thus, my son, you know the Way of Palingenesis. By the Dekad brought-into-being, geniture of apprehension was produced, banishing those twelve; and by this geniture we are of theos.

Thus whomsoever because of that generosity obtains divine geniture, having gone beyond physical perceptibility, discovers that they consist of such, and are pleased.

With a quietude, father, engendered by theos, the seeing is not of the sight from the eyes but that through the noetic actus of the craft. I am in the Heavens; on Earth; in Water; in Air. I am in living beings, in plants; in the womb, before the womb, after the womb. Everywhere.

Which understanding of Palingenesis is of a personal, an interior, "moving away from the brutish Alastoras" involving a casting out of unfairness, a return to nobility, and an appreciation of Ancestral Custom [17]. Which 'moving away' is an interior anados.

### **A Human Numinosity**

The paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous is thus profoundly human, individual in its immanency, subject to reason, to change, and to development. There is no eternally governing omnipotent deity since in classical mythoi even a governing god could be overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself displaced his own father.

There is, in classical spirituality, no persecution of 'heretics' in the name of this or that interpretation of mythoi; no dogmatic scorn of women as there is in Tertullian and, for well over a thousand years, as there is in other Christian exegesists; no required meekness of submission to something or someone regarded as omnipotent; no concept of 'sin' as a punishable transgression of some immutable divine law, for even Zeus after his triumph only gave mortals a certain guidance:

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων  
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:  
ὄν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-  
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος  
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν. Aeschylus: Agamemnon, 174-183

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,  
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;  
Of he who guided mortals to reason,  
Who laid down that this possesses authority:  
Learning from adversity.

Which Zeus-given guidance - even though presencing his authority, and thus presencing the numinous in and for a certain Aeon - might be overturned, replaced, by a god or by a goddess who overthrew and replaced Zeus and who after their victory might well declaim a new Logos.

For the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension - and thus classical spirituality - was an apprehension, a spirituality, of evolution, of change, and of the necessity of harmonious balance, of avoidance of hubris. Of the virtue of ἀρετή understood as a μέσον (meson, median, a balance between 'being', actually existing, and 'not-being', a potentiality, as described by Aristotle (Metaphysics 9.1051a) and of perceiving, understanding, and seeking to be in balance with

the harmonious 'cosmic order' (κόσμος) as appreciated by Cicero as a knowing (scientia) of what is divine and what is mortal:

aequam igitur pronuntiabit sententiam ratio adhibita primum  
divinarum humanarumque rerum scientia, quae potest appellari rite  
sapientia, deinde adiunctis virtutibus, quas ratio rerum omnium  
dominas, tu voluptatum satellites et ministras esse voluisti. De Finibus  
Bonorum et Malorum, II, 37.

This balance is an aim of the anados, ἄνοδος - the mystical and individual journey of the mortal toward the numinous - described in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, during which journey the mortal sheds those traits of personality which are injurious to such an attainment:

καὶ οὕτως ὁρμαῖ λοιπὸν ἄνω διὰ τῆς ἁρμονίας, καὶ τῇ πρώτῃ ζώνῃ  
δίδωσι τὴν αὐξητικὴν ἐνέργειαν καὶ τὴν μειωτικὴν, καὶ τῇ δευτέρῃ  
τὴν μηχανὴν τῶν κακῶν, δόλον ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τρίτῃ τὴν  
ἐπιθυμητικὴν ἀπάτην ἀνενέργητον, καὶ τῇ τετάρτῃ τὴν ἀρχοντικὴν  
προφανίαν ἀπλεονέκτητον, καὶ τῇ πέμπτῃ τὸ θράσος τὸ ἀνόσιον καὶ  
τῆς τόλμης τὴν προπέτειαν, καὶ τῇ ἕκτῃ τὰς ἀφορμὰς τὰς κακὰς τοῦ  
πλούτου ἀνενεργήτους, καὶ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ ζώνῃ τὸ ἐνεδρεῦον ψεῦδος.  
Poemandres, 25

Thus does the mortal hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and - in the second one - those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait.

What is injurious to such a harmonious balance is what is dishonourable, with τὸ ἀγαθὸν - Summum Bonum - thus understood as honestum, as what is honourable, noble:

summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris:  
unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona  
sunt. Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

the greatest good is that which is honourable. Also - and you may wonder at this - only that which is honourable is good, with all other 'goods' simply false and deceitful.

An understanding also manifest in Cicero:

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni  
utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure

laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum, II, 45f.

For honestum is how hubris can be avoided and balance maintained, and is the essence of καλὸς κάγαθός which presences the numinous, the divine, in and among mortals:

εἰ δύνασαι νοῆσαι τὸν θεόν, νοήσεις τὸ καλὸν καὶ ἀγαθόν [...] ἐὰν περὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ζητῇς, καὶ περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ ζητεῖς μία γὰρ ἐστὶν εἰς αὐτὸ ἀποφέρουσα ὁδός, ἡ μετὰ γνώσεως εὐσέβεια. Tractate VI, 5

If you are able to apprehend theos you can apprehend the beautiful and the noble [...] Thus a quest for theos is a quest for the beautiful, and there is only one path there: an awareness of the numinous combined with knowledge.

Furthermore, as stressed by Cicero in many of his writings, and as indicated by the quotation from tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum - "the sixth influence invoked for us, against Coveter, is community" - an aspect of the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous, of καλὸς κάγαθός, is an awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnioptent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do.

ooo

### III. Numinous Metaphysics

The ὑμνωδία κρύπτη λόγος Δ part of tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [18] provides a metaphysical insight into the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous and thus into paganus spirituality.

Given in full in Appendix I, the song [19] begins with a polytheistic evocation: to Gaia, Earth, Trees, the Heavens, Air, and to Oceanus who brought "forth sweet water to where was inhabited and where was uninhabited to so sustain all mortals."

It addresses the Master Artisan, κτίσεως κύριον, the 'Founding Lord', who is τὸ πᾶν καὶ τὸ ἓν, 'all that exists' and 'The One', the monad, with τὸ πᾶν (literally, The All) a formulaic metaphysical phrase also occurring in tractate XII (τὸ πᾶν ἐν παντί) and in tractate XI which provides the metaphysical context:

Ἄκουε, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔχει ὁ θεὸς καὶ τὸ πᾶν. θεός, ὁ αἰὼν, ὁ κόσμος, ὁ χρόνος, ἡ γένεσις. ὁ θεὸς αἰῶνα ποιεῖ, ὁ αἰὼν δὲ τὸν κόσμον, ὁ κόσμος δὲ χρόνον, ὁ χρόνος δὲ γένεσιν. τοῦ δὲ θεοῦ ὡς περ οὐσία ἐστὶ [τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, ἡ εὐδαιμονία,] ἡ σοφία· τοῦ δὲ αἰῶνος ἡ ταυτότης· τοῦ δὲ κόσμου ἡ τάξις· τοῦ δὲ χρόνου ἡ μεταβολή· τῆς δὲ γενέσεως ἡ ζωὴ καὶ ὁ θάνατος

Hear then, my son, of theos and of everything: theos, Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, geniture. Theos brought Aion into being; Aion: Kosmos; Kosmos, Kronos; Kronos, geniture. It is as if the quidditas of theos is actuality, honour, the beautiful, good fortune, Sophia. Of Aion, identity; of Kosmos, arrangement; of Kronos, variation; of geniture, Life and Death.

Which context is the harmonious, the ordered, structure of Reality, with ourselves as mortals connected to that-which is beyond us: in λόγος Δ to Gaia, Earth, Trees, the Heavens, and The One; and in tractate XI to Aion, Kronos, Kosmos, and importantly to geniture, to both Life and Death.

There is respect of (ancestral) custom; praise of virtues such as honesty; and a mortal gratitude:

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,  
Through me sing of such respect.  
Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:  
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,  
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusosity of those my Arts.  
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actuosities;  
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.  
Through me, may Kosmos accept  
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

Thus the apprehension, the spirituality, is uncomplicated, personal, devoid of dogma, restrained. As it is in the poem to Aphrodite by Sappho, quoted in Part II.

### **Numinous Criteria**

If the numinous is a presencing, and an apprehension by us, of the divine, of the sacred, then is divinity, is the sacred, the sole domain of, a presencing of, the masculous - or such that the masculous dominates - or is it the domain of the muliebral; or the domain of such a balance between masculous and muliebral as the culture of pathei-mathos seems to indicate it is and should be. My own pathei-mathos certainly indicates that the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral and can be apprehended through a personal, an interior, balance between masculous and muliebral.

A masculous presencing is and has been manifest in a predominance of male deities; or in a dominant male deity; and/or in legends and myths which celebrate masculous values, such as competitiveness, a certain harshness, a desire to organize/control, a perceived conflict between some-thing, some abstraction, denoted 'good' and some-thing, some abstraction, denoted as 'evil', and a following of or an adherence to abstractions in general (such as a perceived divine law or some interpretation of religiosity) over and above personal love. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a masculous presencing is manifest in a religion, with the attendant organized worship and devotion, with there existing a hierarchy, a creed or an article or articles of faith, and usually some texts, whether written or aural, regarded as sacred and/or as divinely inspired and which invariably require interpretation.

A muliebral presencing is or would be manifest in a predominance of female deities; or in a dominant female deity; in legends and myths which celebrate muliebral virtues, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion; and in the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a muliebral presencing is manifest in a personal, varied, worship and devotion; in a personal weltanschauung and not in a religion; has no hierarchy; no creed, no article or articles of faith; and no texts whether written or aural.

Historically, it seems that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous where there is a male omnipotent deity whether named as God, Allah, or Jehovah; where the revelation and the interpretation of texts is taught primarily by men; where there is an eschatology of 'good' verses 'evil' with the consequent and perceived necessary conflicts and battles; with sentiments such as those by Tertullian in *De Cultu Feminarum* and in *De Monogamia* developed, and with such a presencing aptly described as patriarchal. In the case of Christianity, while some interpretations of it have in the past century slowly evolved to be somewhat more balanced in respect of the muliebral, it is still primarily a patriarchal presencing.

Historically, while the paganus apprehension of Greco-Roman culture was also primarily masculous it did presence aspects of the muliebral, manifest for example in female deities such as Athena, Artemis, and Gaia, and thus was somewhat more balanced, more harmonious in terms of re-presenting our human physis, than Christianity.

Thus a necessary question is how can (what I consider to be) a numinous balance between masculous and muliebral be metaphysically expressed, given that the culture of pathei-mathos has moved us, or can move us, beyond anthropomorphic deities, whether male or female; beyond myths and legends; beyond reliance on texts regarded as sacred and/or as divinely inspired; and even beyond the need for denotatum and religion.

Starting from the paganus apprehension described above, and using our human culture of pathei-mathos as a guide, such a metaphysics is (i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κἀγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous.

---



## Footnotes

[1] By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification is founded on accepting as authoritative certain writings (texts) and/or a certain book or books.

[2] *De Pudicitia*, X, 12.

[3] The archaeological - the physical - evidence seems to indicate that the Greek text of the Old Testament is older than the Hebrew text, with the earliest manuscript fragment being Greek Papyrus 458 currently housed in the Rylands Papyri collection - qv. Bulletin of the John Rylands Library, 20 (1936), pp. 219-45 - and which fragment was discovered in Egypt and has been dated as being from the second century BCE.

In contrast, the earliest fragments of the Old Testament in Hebrew date from c.150 BCE to c. 70 CE, and are part of what has come to be known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. In addition, the earliest known Greek - and almost complete - text of the Old Testament, Codex Vaticanus, dates from c.320 CE with the earliest complete Hebrew text of the Tanakh, the Aleppo Codex, dating from centuries later, around 920 CE.

While it is and has been a common presumption that the Hebrew version of the Old Testament is older than the Greek version, my inclination is to favour the extant physical evidence over and above presumption. Were physical evidence of Hebrew texts earlier than Greek Papyrus 458 discovered, and of there existing a complete Hebrew text dating from before Codex Vaticanus, my inclination would be to revise my opinion based on a study of the new evidence.

[4] *De Monogamia*, VII, 1.

[5] Tertullian, *De Cultu Feminarum*, I, 2.

[6] The Latin word translated by nexion is *ianua*, which implies a gateway, a door, an entrance. The Latin translated "You are The Resignatrix of The Tree" is *tu es arboris illius resignatrix*, with resignatrix here - as with the preceding *ianua* - suggestive of a title, of the woman who broke the seal affixed to the forbidden fruit of the Tree Of Knowledge. A more literal translation of the

following *tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix* is: You are the first to forsake Divine Decree.

The three phrases *tu es diaboli ianua*, *tu es arboris illius resignatrix*, *tu es diuinae legis prima desertrix*, read as if they might be some 'evil' heathen incantation, which might have been Tertullian's intent.

[7] As described in my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I use the term physis, φύσις, contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings.

I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

In respect of the term numinous, it derives from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power". Numen has been used in English since the 15th century, with 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

As noted in my *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, I use it to additionally describe

"what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed

humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή."

[8] Volume I (chapters 1-4) of my translation of and commentary on the Gospel According To John was published in July 2017 with volume II (chapters 5-10) scheduled for publication in 2019.

A version in html – including chapter 5, which is subject to revision and updated as and when new verses and the associated commentary are available – is (as of October 2017) at <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

[9] What follows is a (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 3:16-21.

° *Nomos*. νόμος. A transliteration since as with 'logos' a particular metaphysical principle is implied and one which requires contextual interpretation; a sense somewhat lost if the English word 'law' is used especially given what the word 'law' often now imputes.

° *Phaos*. Given that φάος metaphorically (qv. Iliad, Odyssey, Hesiod, etcetera) implies the being, the life, 'the spark', of mortals, and, generally, either (i) the illumination, the light, that arises because of the Sun and distinguishes the day from the night, or (ii) any brightness that provides illumination and thus enables things to be seen, I am inclined to avoid the vague English word 'light' which all other translations use and which, as in the case of God, has, in the context of the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth, acquired particular meanings mostly as a result of centuries of exegesis and which therefore conveys or might convey something that the Greek word, as used by the author of this particular Greek text, might not have done.

Hence my transliteration – using the Homeric φάος instead of φῶς – and which transliteration requires the reader to pause and consider what phaos may, or may not, mean, suggest, or imply. As in the matter of logos, it is most probably not some sort of philosophical principle, neo-Platonist or otherwise.

Interestingly, φῶς occurs in conjunction with ζωή and θεός and ἐγένετο and Ἄνθρωπος in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, thus echoing the evangel of John:

φῶς καὶ ζωή ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατήρ, ἐξ οὗ ἐγένετο ὁ Ἄνθρωπος  
(Poemandres, 1.21)

Life and phaos are [both] of Theos, The Father, Who brought human beings into existence

° *For their deeds were harmful*. ἦν γὰρ αὐτῶν πονηρὰ τὰ ἔργα. Harmful: that is, caused pain and suffering. To impute to πονηρός here the meaning of a moral abstract 'evil' is, in my view, mistaken. Similarly with the following φαῦλος in

v.20 which imparts the sense of being 'mean', indifferent.

Since the Phaos is Jesus, those who are mean, those who do harm, avoid Jesus because (qv. 2.25) he – as the only begotten son of Theos – knows the person within and all their deeds. Thus, fearing being exposed, they avoid him, and thus cannot put their trust in him and so are condemned and therefore lose the opportunity of eternal life.

° *whomsoever practices disclosure*. ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. Literally, 'they practising the disclosing.' That is, those who disclose – who do not hide – who they are and what deeds they have done, and who thus have no reason to fear exposure. Here, as in vv.19-20, the meaning is personal – about the character of people – and not about abstractions such as "evil" and "truth", just as in previous verses it is about trusting in the character of Jesus. Hence why here ἀλήθεια is 'sincerity', a disclosing, a revealing – the opposite of lying and of being deceitful – and not some impersonal 'truth'.

[10] Note how Jesus does not disapprovingly preach about – does not even mention – the apparently superstitious practice of infirm individuals waiting by a 'miraculous' pool in order to be cured.

[11] A (slightly edited) extract from my commentary on John 5:1-16.

° *the place of the sheep*. Since the Greek προβατικός means "of or relating to sheep" and there is no mention of a 'gate' (or of anything specific such as a market) I prefer a more literal translation. It is a reasonable assumption that the sheep were, and had in previous times been, kept there prior to being offered as sacrifices, as for example sheep are still so held in particular places in Mecca during Eid al-Adha, the Muslim feast of sacrifice.

° *named in the language of the Hebrews*. ἐπιλεγομένη Ἑβραϊστὶ.

° *the infirm*. The Greek word ἀσθενέω implies those lacking normal physical strength.

° *awaiting a change in the water*. Reading ἐκδεχομένων τὴν τοῦ ὕδατος κίνησιν with the Textus Receptus, omitted by NA28, but included in the Anglo-Saxon version, by Tyndale and Wycliffe.

° *Envoy of Theos*. Reading ἄγγελος γὰρ κυρίου κατὰ καιρῶν κατέβαινεν (qv. Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on John, Book II, V, 1-4, Migne Patrologia Graeca 73) and ἐν τῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, καὶ ἐτάρασσεν τὸ ὕδωρ· ὁ οὖν πρῶτος ἐμβὰς μετὰ τὴν παραχὴν τοῦ ὕδατος, ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο, ᾧ δὴποτε κατειχέτο νοσήματι with the Textus Receptus. The verse is omitted by NA28, but included in ASV, Tyndale, and Wycliffe.

a) *envoy*. As noted in the commentary on 1:51, interpreting ἄγγελος as 'envoy' (of theos) and not as 'angel', particularly given the much

later Christian iconography associated with the term 'angel'.

b) *Theos*. Regarding ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου, qv. Matthew 28.2 ἄγγελος γάρ κυρίου καταβὰς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ, "an envoy of [the] Lord/Master descended from Empyrean/the heavens." Since here κύριος implies Theos (cf. John 20.28 where it is used in reference to Jesus), an interpretation such as "envoy of Theos" avoids both the phrase "envoy of the Master" – which is unsuitable given the modern connotations of the word 'master' – and the exegetical phrase "angel/envoy of the Lord" with all its associated and much later iconography both literal, by means of Art, and figurative, in terms of one's imagination. An alternative expression would be "envoy of the Domine," with Domine (from the Latin Dominus) used in English as both a respectful form of address and as signifying the authority of the person or a deity.

c) *became complete*. ὑγιὴς ἐγένετο. The suggestion is of the person becoming 'whole', complete, *sanus*, and thus ceasing to be 'broken', incomplete, infirm.

° *bedroll*. κράβατος (Latin, grabatus) has no suitable equivalent in English since in context it refers to the portable bed and bedding of the infirm. The nearest English approximation is bedroll.

° *And, directly, the man became complete*. καὶ εὐθέως ἐγένετο ὑγιὴς ὁ ἄνθρωπος. Metaphysically, the Evangelist is implying that 'completeness' – wholeness – for both the healthy and the infirm (whether infirm because of sickness or a physical infirmity) arises because of and through Jesus.

° *treated*. Taking the literal sense of θεραπεύω here. Hence: cared for, treated, attended to. As a healer or a physician might care for, treat, or attend to, someone.

° *no more missteps*. μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε. That is, make no more mistakes in judgement or in deeds. Qv. the Introduction [to Volume I of the translation] regarding translating ἁμαρτία in a theologically neutral way as 'mistake' or 'error' instead of by the now exegetical English word 'sin'. Cf. 1.29, 8.7, et seq.

° *Judaeans*. Qv. my essay *A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John*, which is included here as an appendix

° *harass*. διώκω. Cf. the Latin *persequor*, for the implication is of continually 'following' and pursuing him in order to not only try and worry or distress him but also (as becomes evident) to find what they regard is evidence against him in order to have him killed, qv. 5.18, 7.1, 7.19 et seq.

[12] *Ἱερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. Included in: David Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, 2017.

[13] The culture of *pathei-mathos* is described in Appendix III.

[14] Myatt, David. *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. p.27.

[15] This hermetic tractate, as so many others, employs a technical - an esoteric - vocabulary. Thus terms such as νοερός, ἀσφίγγωτος, ἐνέργεια, ἐνδιάθετον ἄνθρω - to name but a few - require contextual interpretation and avoidance of such common English words (for example, 'intellectual', and energy) as may impose modern meanings on such an ancient text.

The commentary which accompanies my translation of tractate XIII - in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* - provides the relevant context and an explanation of my translating choices such as Actualis and cræft.

[16] As noted in the commentary on my translation I have chosen to personify τιμωρία, partly in reference to Clytemnestra as depicted by Aeschylus:

*alastoras*. Since the Greek word τιμωρία is specific and personal, implying vengeance, retribution, and also a divine punishment, it seems apposite to try and keep, in English, the personal sense even though no specific deeds or deeds are mentioned in the text, but especially because of what follows: Τιμωροὺς γὰρ ἐν ἑμαυτῷ ἔχω, ὦ πάτερ. Hence my interpretation, "the brutish *alastoras* of Materies," using the English term *alastoras* - singular, *alastor*, from the Greek ἀλάστωρ, an avenging deity, and also a person who avenges certain deeds. Qv. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 1497-1508.

*materies*. ὕλη. A variant form of the Latin *materia*, thus avoiding the English word 'matter' which now has connotations, derived from sciences such as Physics, that are not or may not be relevant here. In addition, the term requires contextual, metaphysical, interpretation, for as used here it may or may not be equivalent to the ὕλη of Poemandres 10, of III:1, καὶ τὰ λοιπά. Hence why I have here chosen 'materies' rather than - as in those other tractates - 'substance'.

[17] The goddess Δίκη - qv. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, vv 213-218 - is the goddess of Fairness and of Tradition manifest as Tradition is in Ancestral Custom(s). The usual translation of δίκη is Justice or Judgement which English terms, with their various post Greco-Roman and modern abstractive and legal connotations, are in my view rather misleading.

[18] I incline toward the view that the song, begun in section 17, ends in section 18, an ending signalled by the expression at the beginning of section 19, "such is what the Arts within me loudly call out," ταῦτα βοῶσιν αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν ἐμοί. Sections 19-21 thus being a personal exegesis.

[19] Crucial in understanding the paganus nature of the song are the term

ὕμνος and the lines οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμός, καὶ δέξαιτο τῶν δυνάμεων μου τὴν εὐλογία. αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν ἐμοί, ὑμνεῖτε τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ πᾶν.

Given that the English term 'hymn' is now commonly associated with Christianity it is in my view an unsatisfactory translation of ὕμνος in this as in other tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum especially as ὕμνος was used by Homer in The Odyssey (VIII, 428-9) in association with enjoying a splendid feast, τὰ οἱ Φαίηκες ἀμύμονες ἐνθάδ' ἔνεικαν δαιτί τε τέρπηται καὶ ἀοιδῆς ὕμνον ἀκούων, where 'song' is an appropriate translation, as it is in this tractate.

To appreciate the aforementioned lines in the apposite cultural and textual context, is to understand that δυνάμεων is not, in this tractate and in some others, suggestive of 'power' possessed by an individual - as in the egoistic 'my powers' - but rather a skill, an ability, craft, an art, that has been cultivated and learnt as in a person learning the art of chanson.

Hence my reading of those lines as:

May the one who is the eye of perception accept this fond  
celebration

From my Arts.

Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists.

Which is in contrast to the conventional interpretation, which is along the following lines: "He is the mind's eye. May he accept praise from my powers. Powers with me sing a hymn to the one and to the universe."

---

## Appendix I

### Logos Δ. The Esoteric Song

#### Cantio Arcana

ὕμνωδία κρύπτη λόγος Δ

πᾶσα φύσις κόσμου προσδεχέσθω τοῦ ὕμνου τὴν ἀκοήν. ἀνοίγηθι γῆ, ἀνοιγῆτω μοι πᾶς μοχλὸς ὄμβρου, τὰ δένδρα μὴ σείεσθε. ὑμνεῖν μέλλω τὸν τῆς κτίσεως κύριον, καὶ τὸ πᾶν καὶ τὸ ἐν. ἀνοίγητε οὐρανοί, ἄνεμοί τε στῆτε. ὁ κύκλος ὁ ἀθάνατος τοῦ θεοῦ, προσδεξάσθω μου τὸν λόγον· μέλλω γὰρ ὑμνεῖν τὸν κτίσαντα τὰ πάντα, τὸν πῆξαντα τὴν γῆν καὶ οὐρανὸν κρεμάσαντα καὶ ἐπιτάξαντα ἐκ τοῦ ὠκεα νοῦ τὸ γλυκὺ ὕδωρ εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην καὶ ἀοίκητον ὑπάρχειν εἰς διατροφήν καὶ κτίσιν πάντων τῶν ἀνθρώπων, τὸν ἐπιτάξαντα πῦρ

φανῆναι εἰς πᾶσαν πρᾶξιν θεοῖς τε καὶ ἀνθρώποις. δῶμεν πάντες ὁμοῦ αὐτῷ  
τὴν εὐλογίαν, τῷ ἐπὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν μετεώρῳ, τῷ πάσης φύσεως κτίστη.

οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ τοῦ νοῦ ὀφθαλμός, καὶ δέξαιτο τῶν δυνάμεων μου τὴν εὐλογίαν.  
αἱ δυνάμεις αἱ ἐν ἐμοί, ὑμνεῖτε τὸ ἐν καὶ τὸ πᾶν· συνάσατε τῷ θελήματί μου  
πᾶσαι αἱ ἐν ἐμοὶ δυνάμεις. γνώσις ἁγία, φωτισθεὶς ἀπὸ σοῦ, διὰ σοῦ τὸ νοητὸν  
φῶς ὑμῶν χαίρω ἐν χαρᾷ νοῦ. πᾶσαι δυνάμεις ὑμνεῖτε σὺν ἐμοί. καὶ σύ μοι,  
ἐγκράτεια, ὕμνει. δικαιοσύνη μου, τὸ δίκαιον ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ. κοινωνία ἡ ἐμή, τὸ  
πᾶν ὕμνει δι' ἐμοῦ· ὕμνει ἀλήθεια τὴν ἀλήθειαν. τὸ ἀγαθόν, ἀγαθόν, ὕμνει· ζωὴ  
καὶ φῶς, ἀφ' ὑμῶν εἰς ὑμᾶς χωρεῖ ἡ εὐλογία. εὐχαριστῶ σοι, πάτερ, ἐνέργεια  
τῶν δυνάμεων. εὐχαριστῶ σοι, θεέ, δύναμις τῶν ἐνεργειῶν μου· ὁ σὸς Λόγος δι'  
ἐμοῦ ὕμνει σέ. δι' ἐμοῦ δέξαι τὸ πᾶν λόγῳ, λογικὴν θυσίαν.

Let every Physis of Kosmos favourably listen to this song.  
Gaia: be open, so that every defence against the Abyss is opened for me;  
Trees: do not incurvate;  
For I now will sing for the Master Artisan,  
For All That Exists, and for The One.

Open: you Celestial Ones; and you, The Winds, be calm.  
Let the deathless clan of theos accept this, my logos.  
For I shall sing of the maker of everything;  
Of who established the Earth,  
Of who affixed the Heavens,  
Of who decreed that Oceanus should bring forth sweet water  
To where was inhabited and where was uninhabited  
To so sustain all mortals;  
Of who decreed that Fire should bring light  
To divinities and mortals for their every use.

Let us all join in fond celebration of who is far beyond the Heavens:  
That artisan of every Physis.

May the one who is the eye of perceivance accept this fond celebration  
From my Arts.

Let those Arts within me sing for The One and for All That Exists  
As I desire all those Arts within me to blend, together.

Numinous knowledge, from you a numinal understanding:  
Through you, a song of apprehended phaos,  
Delighted with delightful perceivance.  
Join me, all you Arts, in song.

You, mastery, sing; and you, respectful of custom,  
Through me sing of such respect.



Sing, my companions, for All That Exists:  
Honesty, through me, sing of being honest,  
The noble, sing of nobility.

Phaos and Life: fond celebration spreads from us to you.

My gratitude, father: actusity of those my Arts.  
My gratitude, theos: Artisan of my actusities;  
Through me, the Logos is sung for you.  
Through me, may Kosmos accept  
Such respectful wordful offerings as this.

---

## **Appendix II**

### **A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John**

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ  
Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John - a work in progress [1] - I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

For, after much consideration, I chose - perhaps controversially - to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words gýv/gyw and Iewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains

the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, æfter iudea geclensunge, "according to Judaeans cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἔδει δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

ooo

In respect of the term ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeans Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίων – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

## Ιουδαικής αρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὴ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

## Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίους

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερέυς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνων ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

### **Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός**

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeian, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὅφ' ἥς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ  
κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν  
ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

ooo

### **Conclusion**

As noted in the Preface to my translation of The Gospel of John, I have endeavoured to avoid reading into the text the meanings that some of the English words conventionally used in other translations – and given in lexicons – may now suggest, or do suggest often as a result of over a thousand years of exegesis. In the matter of Ἰουδαία the translation by the relatively recent term 'Jews' has suggested meanings which, at least in my fallible opinion, are irrelevant to the milieu of the Gospels and which thus distorts, or which can distort, the narrative of the Gospel of John.

[1] As of July 2017, the translation of and a commentary on chapters one to four of The Gospel of John have been completed, which partial translation and commentary is available at: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

[2] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus.

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[3] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

---

### Appendix III

#### Suffering And The Human Culture Of Pathei-Mathos

This is an extract from a written reply, in September 2013, to a personal correspondent. It has been revised for inclusion here, with some footnotes added in an effort to elucidate some parts of the text.

In respect of the question whether I am optimistic about our future as a species, I vacillate between optimism and pessimism, knowing as I - and so many - do from experience that the world contains people who do good things [1], people who do bad things, and people who when influenced or led or swayed by some-thing or someone can veer either way; and given that it seems as if in each generation there are those - many - who have not learned or who cannot learn from the pathei-mathos of previous generations, from our collective human πάθει μάθος that has brought-into-being a culture of pathei-mathos thousands of years old. Historically - prior to, during after the time of Cicero, and over a thousand years later during and after the European Renaissance - this culture was evident in Studia Humanitatis, and is now

presented in works inspired by or recollecting personal pathos and described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; in particular works of literature, poetry, and drama; in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

This culture of pathos reveals to us the beauty, the numinosity, of personal love; the numinosity of humility, and compassion; and the tragic lamentable unnecessary suffering caused by hubris, dishonour, selfishness, inconsiderance, intolerance, prejudice, hatred, war, extremism, and ideologies [2]. A world-wide suffering so evident, today, for example in the treatment of and the violence (by men) toward women; in the continuing armed conflicts - regional and local, over some-thing - that displace tens of thousands of people and cause destruction, injury, and hundreds of thousands of deaths; and evident also in the killing of innocent people [3] by those who adhere to a harsh interpretation of some religion or some political ideology.

Do good people, world-wide, outweigh bad ones? My experiences and travels incline me to believe they may do, although it seems as if the damage the bad ones do, the suffering they cause, sometimes and for a while outweighs the good that others do. But does the good done, in societies world-wide, now outweigh the bad done, especially such large-scale suffering as is caused by despots, corruption, armed conflict, and repressive regimes? Probably, at least in some societies. And yet even in such societies where, for example, education is widespread, there always seem to be selfish, dishonourable, inconsiderate, people; and also people such as the extremist I was with my hubriatic certitude-of-knowing inciting or causing hatred and violence and intolerance and glorifying war and Kampf and trying to justify killing in the name of some abstraction or some belief or some cause or some ideology. People mostly, it seems, immune to and/or intolerant of the learning of the culture of pathos; a learning available to us in literature, music, Art, memoirs, in the aural and written recollections of those who endured or who witnessed hatred, violence, intolerance, conflict, war, and killing, and a learning also available in the spiritual message of those who taught humility, goodness, love, and tolerance. Immune or intolerant people who apparently can only change - or who could only possibly change for the better - only when they themselves are afflicted by such vicissitudes, such personal misfortune and suffering, as is the genesis of their own pathos.

Thus, and for example, in Europe there is the specific pathos that the First and the Second World Wars wrought. A collective learning regarding the destruction, the suffering, the brutality, the horror, of wars where wakeful machines and mass manufactured weapons played a significant role.

All this, while sad, is perhaps the result of our basic human nature; for we are jumelle, and not only because we are "deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal" [4] but also because it seems to me that what is good and bad resides in us all [5], nascent or alive or as part of our personal past, and that it is just so

easy, so tempting, so enjoyable, sometimes, to indulge in, to do, what is bad, and often harder for us to do what is right. Furthermore, we do seem to have a tendency - or perhaps a need - to ascribe what is bad to being 'out there', in something abstract or in others while neglecting or not perceiving our own faults and mistakes and while asserting or believing that we, and those similar to us or who we are in agreement with, are right and thus have the 'correct', the righteous, answers. Thus it is often easier to find what is bad 'out there' rather than within ourselves; easier to hate than to love, especially as a hatred of impersonal others sometimes affords us a reassuring sense of identity and a sense of being 'better' than those others.

Will it therefore require another thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years - or more or less millennia - before we human beings en masse, world-wide, are empathic, tolerant, kind, and honourable? Is such a basic change in our nature even possible? Certainly there are some - and not only ideologues of one kind or another - who would argue and who have argued that such a change is not desirable. And is such a change in our nature contingent, as I incline to believe, upon the fair allocation of world resources and solving problems such as hunger and poverty and preventing preventable diseases? Furthermore, how can or could or should such a basic change be brought about - through an organized religion or religions, or through individual governments and their laws and their social and political and economic and educational policies, or through a collocation of governments, world-wide; or through individuals reforming themselves and personally educating others by means of, for example, the common culture of pathei-mathos which all humans share and which all human societies have contributed to for thousands of years? Which leads us on to questions regarding dogma, faith, and dissent; and to questions regarding government and compulsion and 'crime and punishment' and whether or not 'the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'; and also to questions regarding the efficacy of the reforming, spiritual, personal way given that spiritual ways teaching love, tolerance, humility, and compassion - and virtuous as they are, and alleviating and preventing suffering as they surely have - have not after several thousand years effected such a change in humans en masse.

I have to admit that I have no definitive or satisfactory answers to all these, and similar, questions; although my own pathei-mathos - and my lamentable four-decade long experience as an extremist, an ideologue, and as a selfish opinionated inconsiderate person - incline me to prefer the reforming, spiritual, personal way since I feel that such an approach, involving as it does a personal study of, a personal transmission of, the culture of pathei-mathos - and a personal knowing and a living of the humility that the culture of pathei-mathos teaches - is a way that does not cause nor contribute to the suffering that still so blights this world. A personal preference for such a numinous way even though I am aware of three things: of my past propensity to be wrong and thus of the necessary fallible nature of my answers; of the limited nature and thus the long time-scale (of many millennia) that such a way implies; and that it is possible,

albeit improbable except in Science Fiction, that good people of honourable intentions may some day find a non-suffering-causing way by which governments or society or perhaps some new form of governance may in some manner bring about that change, en masse, in our human nature required to evolve us into individuals of empathy, compassion, and honour, who thus have something akin to a 'prime directive' to guide them in their dealings with those who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves.

Were I to daydream about some future time when such a galactic 'prime directive' exists, directing we spacefaring humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of non-terrans who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, then I would be inclined to speculate that unless we by then have fundamentally and irretrievably changed ourselves for the better then it would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it. For that is what we have done, among ourselves, for thousands of years; making then breaking some treaty or other; making some excuse to plunder resources; having some legal institution change some existing law or make some new law to give us the 'right' to do what it is we want to do; or manufacture some new legislative or governing body in order to 'legalize' what we do or have already done. Always using a plethora of words - and, latterly, legalese - to persuade others, and often ourselves, that what we do or are about to do or have already done is justified, justifiable, necessary, or right.

Perhaps the future excuse to so interfere contrary to a prime directive would be the familiar one of 'our security'; perhaps it would be an economic one of needing to exploit 'their' resources; perhaps it would be one regarding the threat of 'terrorism'; perhaps it would be the ancient human one, hallowed by so much blood, of 'our' assumed superiority, of 'their system' being 'repressive' or 'undemocratic' or of they - those 'others' - being 'backward' or 'uncivilized' and in need of being enlightened and 're-educated' by our 'progressive' ideas. Or, more probable, it would be some new standard or some new fashionable political or social or even religious dogma by which we commend ourselves on our progress and which we use, consciously or otherwise, to judge others by.

The current reality is that even if we had or soon established a terran 'prime directive' directing we humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of other humans here on Earth who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, it is fairly certain it "would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it..."

Which mention of a terran 'prime directive' leads to two of the other questions which cause me to vacillate between optimism and pessimism in regard to our future as a species. The question of increasing population, and the question of the finite resources of this Earth. Which suggests to me, as some



others, that - especially as the majority of people now live in urban areas - a noble option is for us, as a species, to cooperate and betake ourselves to colonize our Moon, then Mars, and seek to develop such technology as would take us beyond our Solar System. For if we do not do this then the result would most probably be, at some future time, increasing conflict over land and resources, mass migrations (probably resulting in more conflict) and such governments or authorities as then exist forced by economic circumstance to adopt policies to reduce or limit their own population. Global problems probably exasperated still further by the detrimental changes that available evidence indicates could possibly result from what has been termed 'climate change' [6].

But is the beginning of this noble option of space colonization viable in the near future? Possibly not, given that the few countries that have the resources, the space expertise and the technology necessary - and the means to develop existing space technology - do not consider such exploration and colonization as a priority, existing as they seem to do in a world where nation-States still compete for influence and power and where conflict - armed, deadly, and otherwise - is still regarded as a viable solution to problems.

Which leads we human beings, with our jumelle character, confined to this small planet we call Earth, possibly continuing as we have, for millennia, continued: a quarrelsome species, often engaged (like primates) in minor territorial disputes; in our majority unempathic; often inconsiderate, often prejudiced (even though we like to believe otherwise); often inclined to place our self-interest and our pleasure first; often prone to being manipulated or to manipulating others; often addicted to the slyness of words spoken and written and heard and read; often believing 'we' are better than 'them'; and fighting, raping, hating, killing, invading here, interfering there. And beset by the problems wrought by increasing population, by dwindling resources, by mass migrations, by continuing armed conflicts (regional, local, supranational, over something) and possibly also affected by the effects of climate change.

Yet also, sometimes despite ourselves, we are beings capable of - and have shown over millennia - compassion, kindness, gentleness, tolerance, love, fairness, reason, and a valourous self-sacrifice that is and has been inspirational. But perhaps above all we have, in our majority, exuded and kept and replenished the virtue of hope; hoping, dreaming, of better times, a better future, sometime, somewhere - and not, as it happens, for ourselves but for our children and their children and the future generations yet to be born. And it is this hope that changes us, and has changed us, for the better, as our human culture of pathos so eloquently, so numinously, and so tragically, reveals.

Thus the question seems to be whether we still have hope enough, dreams enough, nobility enough, and can find some way to change ourselves, to thus bring a better - a more fairer, more just, more compassionate - future into-being without causing or contributing to the suffering which so blights, and which has

so blighted, our existence on Earth.

Personally, I am inclined to wonder if the way we need - the hope, the dream, we need - is that of setting forth to explore and colonize our Moon, then Mars, and then the worlds beyond our Solar System, guided by a prime directive.

ooo

### Notes

[1] I understand 'the good' as what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. Honour being here, and elsewhere in my recent writings, understood as the instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

[2] I have expanded, a little, on what I mean by 'the culture of pathei-mathos' in my tract *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*.

[3] As defined by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I understand innocence as "an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do. Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence."

[4] Pœmandres (Corpus Hermeticum), 15 - διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος

As I noted in my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tract, "Jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

[5] qv. Sophocles, Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει...  
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being...  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts - he who arrives

Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[6] Many people have a view about 'climate change' - for or against - for a variety of reasons. My own view is that the scientific evidence available at the moment seems to indicate that there is a change resulting from human activity and that this change could possibly be detrimental, in certain ways, to us and to the other life with which we share this planet. The expressions 'seems to indicate' and 'could possibly be' are necessary given that this view of mine might need to be, and should be, reassessed if and when new evidence or facts become available.

---

### **Bibliography**

- ° W. Bright. *The Gospel Of John. In West-Saxon*. Heath & Co., London. 1906.
  - ° D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017
  - ° D. Myatt. *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. CreateSpace. 2017
  - ° D. Myatt. *The Gospel According to John*. Translation And Commentary. Volume I. Chapters 1 - 4. CreateSpace. 2017
  - ° Nestle-Aland. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012
  - ° A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Paris, 1972
  - ° R.A. Reitzenstein. *Die hellenistischen Mysterienreligionen*. Teubner, Leipzig, 1927.
-

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2017

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt

---

## On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision

Over forty years ago, many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library of a monastery reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [1], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

Such minutiae make the process of translation – at least for me and in respect of the Gospel of John – somewhat slow, partly because they can change the meaning; or rather, provide a possible alternative interpretation as is the case in the matter of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Why, for example, is θεὸς here not ὁ θεός (pedantically, the Theos/the God) as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός? Which apparently pedantic question formed part of a somewhat acrimonious theological dispute before, during, and after the time of John Chrysostom; a dispute centred around a possible distinction between (i) The God and (ii) God, father of Jesus, and thus whether Jesus was, like The God, eternally-living. Those who affirmed such a distinction, and who thus came to believe that both Jesus and the πνεύματος ἁγίου (the Holy Spirit) were not equal to The God, were termed ‘Arians’ (after the Alexandrian priest Arius) and were repeatedly condemned as heretics.

In respect of certain words or phrases it is, as so often, a personal choice between following what has become or is regarded as the scholarly consensus or undertaking one’s own research and possibly arriving at a particular, always disputable, interpretation. Such research takes time – days, weeks, months, sometimes longer – and may lead one to revise one’s own particular interpretation, as occurred recently in respect of my interpretation of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, which initially and in respect of grammar was a minority one (qv. Jean Daillé) of *The Logos was Theos* rather than the conventional Theos [God] was the Logos [Word].

In the matter of θεὸς and ὁ θεός the current consensus is that there is in the Gospel of John no distinction between them. However, the arguments used to support this – from Chrysostom on – are theological and devolve around the use of such terms by John, by other Evangelists, by early Christians such as Paul of Tarsus, and even by the authors of LXX. That is, arguments are made regarding, for example, why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it is argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, are often considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βῆθη τοῦ θεοῦ [2] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to some doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay–Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung, brought-into-being by πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I approach the text as I did the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, when I consider a phrase such as πνεῦμα ὁ θεός I wonder about the meaning of πνεῦμα, of θεός, and of ὁ θεός, not in terms of later explanations – in this instance ‘the Holy Spirit’, God, the God – and not in terms of assuming the author is learned concerning and referring to or quoting or paraphrasing texts such as LXX, but rather as terms, ideas, germane to the world, the place, in which the author lived. Understood thus, θεός is just theos; πνεῦμα is just pneuma or ‘spiritus’; with words such as those and other words such as λόγος possibly becoming explained or placed into context by the narrator as the narrative proceeds.

In the matter of my interpretation of the Gospel of John [3], revision is therefore inevitable as I proceed, slowly, hopefully studiously, from verse to verse and from chapter to chapter, for I really have no preconceptions about what such slow studious progress will or might reveal about what has already been interpreted (or misinterpreted) by me, especially as minutiae can take one on various detours, and which detours sometimes cause one to travel far away from the Judaea that existed when Pontius Pilate was Praefectus of that Roman province.

David Myatt  
July 2017

[1] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[2] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Wycliffe, and the King James Bible: "The deep

things of God."

[3] <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

---

## A Note Concerning Θειότης

The Greek term *θειότης* occurs in tractate XI (section 11) of the *Corpus Hermeticum* – *θειότητα μίαν* – where I translated the term as "divinity-presenced." [1]

Plutarch, in *De Pythiae Oraculis* – qv. 407a, 398a-f – uses the word in relation to the oracle at Delphi with divinity-presenced also a suitable translation there.

The context of *θειότης* in tractate XI is:

καὶ ὅτι μὲν ἔστι τις ὁ ποιῶν ταῦτα δῆλον· ὅτι δὲ καὶ εἷς, φανερώτατον· καὶ γὰρ μία ψυχὴ καὶ μία ζωὴ καὶ μία ὕλη. τίς δὲ οὗτος; τίς δὲ ἄν ἄλλος εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός; τίς γὰρ ἄλλωι ἄν καὶ πρέποι ζῶια ἔμψυχα ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ μόνωι τῷ θεῷ; εἷς οὖν θεός. †γελοιότατον†· καὶ τὸν μὲν κόσμον ὠμολόγησας ἀεὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἥλιον ἓνα καὶ τὴν σελήνην μίαν καὶ *θειότητα μίαν*, αὐτὸν δὲ τὸν θεὸν πόστον εἶναι θέλεις [2]

It is evident someone is so creating and that he is One; for Psyche is one, Life is one, Substance is one.

But who is it?

Who could it be if not One, the theos? To whom if not to theos alone would it belong to presence life in living beings?

Theos therefore is One, for having accepted the Kosmos is one, the Sun is one, the Moon is one, and divinity-presenced is one, could you maintain that theos is some other number?

The "one" referred to in tractate XI is most probably the *μονάς*, Monas (Monad) as in tractate IV. As I noted in my Introduction to that tractate [1], John Dee used the term monas in his *Testamentum Johannis Dee Philosophi summi ad Johannem Gwynn, transmissum 1568*, a text included in Elias Ashmole's *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, published in 1652.

An interesting part of tractate IV is:

μονὰς οὓσα οὖν ἀρχὴ πάντα ἀριθμὸν ἐμπεριέχει, ὑπὸ μηδενὸς ἐμπεριεχομένη, καὶ πάντα ἀριθμὸν γεννᾷ ὑπὸ μηδενὸς γεννωμένη ἐτέρου ἀριθμοῦ.

The Monas, since it is the origin, enfolds every arithmos without itself being enfolded by any, begetting every arithmos but not begotten by any.

In respect of arithmos, ἀριθμός, as I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:10 and on XII:15, [1] the usual translation is 'number' but which translation is, in those instances in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, somewhat inappropriate and unhelpful.

Similar to – but conveying a different meaning to – *θειότης* is the Greek term *θεότης*. Different, because *θειότης* relates to *θεῖος* (divine, divinity), and *θεότης* to *θεός* (theos, the god).

The word *θειότης* also occurs – and only once – in the New Testament, in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans*, 1.20, where it led to some theological discussions regarding how and *in what* God is manifest, since some commentators apparently mistakenly equated *θειότης* with *θεότης*. The Latin of Jerome is:

invisibilia enim ipsius a creatura mundi per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur sempiterna quoque eius virtus et divinitas

which translates the Greek *θειότης* by the Latin *divinitas*, a word used by Cicero.

The Greek text of Romans, 1.20, as in NA28, [3] is:

τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται, ἢ τε αἰδὶος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ *θειότης*

The Wycliffe translation:

For the invisible things of him, that be understood, be beheld of the creature of the world, by those things that be made, yea, and the everlasting virtue of him and the Godhead.

King James Bible:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead

Douay-Rheims, Catholic Bible:

For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made; his eternal power also, and divinity



In contradistinction to such translations, were I to temerarily venture my own 'interpretation of meaning' of the Greek – that is, my non-literal translation – it would be along the following lines:

Through the foundation of the Kosmos, those unseen beings of that Being were visible, apprehensible by the beings which that Being produced, as also the sempiternal influence of that Being, and divinity-presenced.

In which interpretation I have endeavoured to express the metaphysical – the ontological – meaning, and have taken αὐτοῦ – literally, "of him/his" – as "of that Being" thus avoiding "gender bias", qv. the appendix – *Concerning Personal Pronouns* – to my commentary on tractate VI. [1] Also, δύναμις is – at least in my fallible opinion – more subtle than the strident "might" or "power" translations impute, suggesting instead "influence" as in tractate III:1, where it interestingly occurs in relation to θεῖος:

δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χέει, by the influence of the numen

My translation of tractate III:1 is as follows:

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis. The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance: the sapientia which is a revealing of all beings. For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance. In the Abyss, an unmeasurable darkness, and, by the influence of the numen, Water and delicate apprehending Pnuema, there, in Kaos. Then, a numinous phaos arose and, from beneath the sandy ground, Parsements coagulated from fluidic essence. And all of the deities <particularize> seedful physis.

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός, καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις. ἦν γὰρ σκότος ἄπειρον ἐν ἀβύσσῳ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ πνεῦμα λεπτὸν νοερόν, δυνάμει θεῖαι ὄντα ἐν χέει. ἀνείθη δὴ φῶς ἅγιον καὶ ἐπάγη τὸ φ' ἁμμωτ' ἐξ ὑγρᾶς οὐσίας στοιχεῖα καὶ θεοὶ πάντες τκαταδιερῶσιτ φύσεως ἐνσπόρου.

Which, for me at least, seems to place the use of θεϊότης in Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* into the correct Hellenic – Greco-Roman – metaphysical context.

David Myatt  
28.iii.18

This article is a revised version of part of a personal reply sent to a life-long friend in answer to a specific question.

ooo

[1] D. Myatt. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Translations And Commentaries. CreateSpace. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369.

[2] The Greek text is from A.D. Nock & A-J. Festugiere, *Corpus Hermeticum*, Paris, 1972.

[3] Nestle-Aland. *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition. Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart. 2012.

---

Greek Bible text from: *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th revised edition, Edited by Barbara Aland and others, copyright 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

---

## Deo Volente And The Epistle Of James

The Latin phrase Deo Volente, usually translated God-willing - and similar to the Muslim Inshallah, **إن شاء الله** - is derived from chapter 4, v.15 of the Epistle of James (Ιάκωβος) dating from c.250-300 CE,

ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγειν ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ καὶ ζήσομεν καὶ ποιήσομεν τοῦτο ἢ ἐκεῖνο. <sup>1</sup>

pro eo ut dicatis si Dominus voluerit et vixerimus faciemus hoc aut illud. <sup>2</sup>

The context is:

13 Ἄγε νῦν οἱ λέγοντες· σήμερον ἢ αὔριον πορευσόμεθα εἰς τήνδε τὴν πόλιν καὶ ποιήσομεν ἐκεῖ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ ἐμπορευσόμεθα καὶ κερδήσομεν,

14 οἵτινες οὐκ ἐπίστασθε τὸ τῆς αὔριον ποία ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν – ἀτμίς γάρ ἐστε ἢ πρὸς ὀλίγον φαινομένη, ἔπειτα καὶ ἀφανιζομένη –

15 ἀντὶ τοῦ λέγειν ὑμᾶς· ἐὰν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ καὶ ζήσομεν καὶ ποιήσομεν τοῦτο ἢ ἐκεῖνο.

16 νῦν δὲ καυχᾶσθε ἐν ταῖς ἀλαζονείαις ὑμῶν· πᾶσα καύχησις τοιαύτη πονηρὰ ἐστίν.

17 εἰδότες οὖν καλὸν ποιεῖν καὶ μὴ ποιοῦντι, ἁμαρτία αὐτῷ ἐστίν.

### Interpretation Of Meaning

13 Go from this you speak today or the next day - that we depart to a particular community <sup>3</sup> and be there a year to buy, sell, and profit -

14. To not being sure about the next day. For what is life? Only a cloud <sup>4</sup> appearing for a while to disappear away.

15 Say instead: if the Lord allows it, then we shall live and do something or whatever.

16 Yet now a prideful posturing, with all posturing an error. <sup>5</sup>

17 It is therefore an error if the one who knows the good does not do it.

David Myatt

May 9<sup>th</sup> 2024

v.1.02

Extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

[1] Novum Testamentum Graece, 28. Barbara und Kurt Aland, Johannes Karavidopoulos, Carlo M. Martini und Bruce M. Metzger, *Zusammenarbeit mit dem Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung*, 2012 Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart.

[2] Jerome, *Nova Vulgata Bibliorum Sacrorum Editio*.

[3] cf. πῦρ καὶ ἀτμίδα καπνοῦ, Acts 2:19, "fire and a cloud of smoke".

[4] Community - πόλις.

In Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου, Josephus wrote: σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφαμεν ἢ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἢ ἔθνων ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων about which I commented, in a footnote to my commentary on chapter five of the Gospel of John:

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations." However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις - understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement - town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.  
<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

Here, in Jerome, community for πόλις seems apposite: cf. Luke 2:4 - Ἀνέβη δὲ καὶ Ἰωσήφ ἀπὸ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ἐκ πόλεως Ναζαρέτ εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν εἰς πόλιν Δαυεὶδ ἣτις καλεῖται Βηθλεέμ, διὰ τὸ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐξ οἴκου καὶ πατριᾶς Δαυεὶδ - where πόλις occurs in relation to Bethlehem and Nazareth of Galilee which were not in the time of Jesus 'cities' or even towns in the modern sense.

[5] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἁμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*, <https://perceiverations.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

<quote>

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin *sons, sontis*.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητος] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγώ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

</quote>

## A Note On The Term Jews In The Gospel of John

In the past century or so there has been much discussion about the term 'the Jews' in standard English translations of the Gospel of John and thus whether or not the Gospel portrays Jews in a negative way given such words about them as the following, from the translation known as the Douay-Rheims Bible:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and he stood not in the truth; because truth is not in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father thereof. (8.44)

In the Gospel of John the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι first occurs in verse 19 of chapter one:

ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς αὐτὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν

In the Douay-Rheims Bible this is translated as: "when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him." In the King James Bible: "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him."

In my translation of John I translated as: "when the Judaeans dispatched priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him." [1]

For, after much consideration, I chose – perhaps controversially – to translate Ἰουδαία by Judaeans, given (i) that the English terms Jews and Jewish (deriving from the 13th/14th century words giv/gyw and lewe) have acquired connotations (modern and medieval) which are not relevant to the period under consideration; and (ii) that the Greek term derives from a place name, Judaea (as does the Latin iudaeus); and (iii) that the Anglo-Saxon version (ASV) retains the sense of the Greek: here (iudeas) as elsewhere, as for example at 2.6, ἅφθιμι ἰουδαίας γεγενῆσθαι, "according to Judaeian cleansing."

Such a translation not only dispenses with the "portraying Jews in a negative way" discussion but also reveals a consistent narrative, with the Evangelist not writing that "the Jews" sought to kill Jesus, but only that some Judaeans desired to do so. In addition, as the story of the Samaritan (Samaritan) woman in chapter 4 makes clear, it places into perspective the difference between Judaea, Samaria, and Galilee, and why the Evangelist narrates that it was "necessary" for Jesus to pass through Samaria on the way to Galilee, Ἐδεῖ δὲ αὐτὸν διέρχεσθαι διὰ τῆς Σαμαρείας.

Given what follows (chapter 4 vv.9-10) this suggests a certain historical antipathy between the people of Judaea and the people of Samaria even though the Samaritans – as is apparent from the Gospel – shared many, but not all, of the religious traditions of the Judaeans, as did most of the people of Galilee, including Jesus. Since the Evangelist specifically writes that it was Judaeans who sought to kill Jesus (5.18; 7.1; 7.19 et seq) it seems as if the antipathy by Judaeans to Jesus of Nazareth in particular and to Samaritans in general – with the Evangelist stating that Judaeans would not share or make use of (συγχράομαι) Samaritan things – arose from Judaeans in general believing that their religious practices based on their particular interpretation of the religion of Moses and the Prophets were correct and that they themselves as a result were 'righteous' – better than Samaritans – with Jesus the Galilean considered by many Judaeans, and certainly by the priestly authorities, as having committed (qv. 10.33) 'blasphemy' (βλασφημία) and thus should be killed.

Such differing religious traditions, such internecine feuds, such religious fanaticism and intolerance on behalf of some Judaeans – an intolerance exemplified also when (qv. 10.22) one of the guards of Caiaphas the High Priest (Καϊάφαν τὸν ἀρχιερέα) physically assaults Jesus for not showing the High Priest "due deference" – exemplifies why in this Gospel Ἰουδαία should be translated not by the conventional term 'Jews' but rather by Judaeans.

In respect of the term Ἰουδαία, it is interesting to consider two writings by Flavius Josephus, and one by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (dating from c.230 CE). The two works by Josephus are conventionally entitled 'Antiquities of the Jews' (c. 93 CE) and 'The Jewish Wars' (c. 75 CE) although I incline toward the view that such titles are incorrect and that the former – entitled in Greek, Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας – should be 'Judaeian Antiquities', while the latter – entitled in Greek, Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίων – should be 'History of the Conflict Between Judaeans and Romaeans', and this because of how Josephus, in those works, describes himself and that conflict.

### Ἰουδαϊκῆς ἀρχαιολογίας

In this work Josephus wrote:

1.4 τούτων δὲ τῶν προειρημένων αἰτιῶν αἱ τελευταῖαι δύο κάμοι συμβεβήκασιν· τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον [...]

1.5 διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος ἐκ τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων [...]

1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι

a) 1.4. τὸν μὲν γὰρ πρὸς τοὺς Ῥωμαίους πόλεμον ἡμῖν τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις γενόμενον, "how that conflict between Romaeans and we Judaeans came about."

To be pedantic, Ῥωμαίους – Romaeans – implies those "of Rome". That is, the word suggests those associated with a

particular place, as does the term Judaeans. Which association of people with a particular place or region is historically germane.

b) 1.5. διάταξιν τοῦ πολιτεύματος τῶν Ἑβραϊκῶν μεθρημηνευμένην γραμμάτων, "the decrees of our civitatum as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews." Less literally, "the laws of our communities as expounded in the writings of the Hebrews."

Thus he does not write about the "Jewish scriptures" or about "the scriptures of the Jews", even though the consensus is that γραφή here – as throughout the New Testament – has the meaning 'scripture' rather than its normal sense of 'that which is written', with the English word 'scripture' (usually written with a capital S) having the specific meaning "the writings of the Old and/or of the New Testament". However, this specific meaning only dates back to c.1300 and was used by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation, from whence, via Tyndale, it was used in the King James version. Prior to 1300, the ASV has *gewrite* – 'what was written', writing, inscription – with the Latin of Jerome having *scripturae*, as does Codex Palatinus of the earlier Vetus Latina. [2] Classically understood, the Latin has the same meaning as the Greek γραφή: writing, something written, an inscription. [3]

c) 1.6 δηλῶσαι τίνες ὄντες ἐξ ἀρχῆς Ἰουδαῖοι, "to make known how Judaeans came about."

### Ἱστορία Ἰουδαϊκοῦ πολέμου πρὸς Ῥωμαίου

In the Προοίμιον of this book Josephus wrote:

a) Ἰώσηπος Ματθίου παῖς ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεύς

That is, Josephus describes himself as "the son of Matthias, a priest, from Jerusalem." He does not write that he is "Jewish" and nor does he write that he is from Judaea.

b) σχεδὸν δὲ καὶ ὧν ἀκοῇ παρειλήφμεν ἡ πόλεων πρὸς πόλεις ἡ ἔθνῶν ἔθνεσι συρραγέντων.

A conventional translation would have πόλις as 'city' and ἔθνος as 'nation' so that the latter part would conventionally be translated along the following lines: "cities would have fought against cities, or nations against nations."

However, the terms 'nation' and 'city' are or can be misleading, given their modern connotations, whereas a historical approximation for ἔθνος would be 'tribe', 'people', or 'community', and for πόλις – understood here as referring to a particular named place with a history of settlement – town, fortified town, burg, borough, municipality. Such choices would produce a translation such as: "municipality would have fought municipality, community with community." The evocation is thus more parochial, more regional, as befits the historical past and the context: here, an insurrection, a conflict between the people of Judaea and the armed forces commanded by Roman citizens (those "of Rome") duly appointed to positions of power.

### Regarding The Term Ἰουδαϊκός

While the term is conventionally cited as meaning Jewish – although LSJ provides no sources, with the English words 'Jew' and 'Jewish' not existing until the 13th/14th century CE – the sense of the term in Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία by Cassius Dio Cocceianus (for example, 67.14.2, 68.1.2) is Judaeans, referring to the people of Judaea and their customs and way of life, Ἰουδαϊκοῦ βίου, τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη:

ὅφ' ἦς καὶ ἄλλοι ἐς τὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἥθη ἐξοκέλλοντες πολλοὶ κατεδικάσθησαν καὶ οἱ μὲν ἀπέθανον οἱ δὲ τῶν γούν οὐσιῶν ἐστερήθησαν (67.14.2)

David Myatt  
2017

[1] As of July 2017, the translation of and a commentary on chapters one to five of The Gospel of John have been completed, which partial translation and commentary is available at: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

[2] For context, the verse in the Latin version of Jerome is: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit iesus.

The Latin of Codex Palatinus, Vetus Latina: Cum ergo resurrexit a mortuis commonefacti sunt discipuli eius quoniam hoc dicebat et crediderunt scripturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

The Latin of Codex Brixianus, Vetus Latina: cum ergo resurrexisset a mortuis recordati sunt discipuli eius quia hoc dixerat et crediderunt scribturae et sermoni quem dixit IHS.

[3] Qv. Tacitus: "non diurna actorum scriptura reperio ullo insigni officio functam." *Annals*, Book III, 3.

# Concerning Roman Catholicism

## Contents

- ° Prefatory Note
- ° In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church. Part One
- ° In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church. Part Two
- ° Persecution And War
- ° Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West
- ° Catholic Still In Spirit?

ooo

## Prefatory Note

Collected here are five essays written between 2015 and 2019 which concern Catholicism and spirituality in general. Several of the essays contain reminiscences about my Catholic upbringing and my time as a Catholic monk. The internet links in the footnotes were valid as of January 2019.

David Myatt  
January 2019

---

## **In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church**

### **Part One**

Listening to *Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis* - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presenced the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires.

Such presencing of the Divine - such a numinous reminder of our fallibility, century following century, as for example in *Kyrie Orbis Factor* as performed by Ensemble Organum - seems to have become somewhat lost in all the recent Media propaganda about how some Catholic priests and monks have allowed their personal desires to overwhelm such a presencing of the numinous and which presencing of the divine is and was manifest in compassion, empathy, and a personal humility.

Lost, in all the Media propaganda, because I from personal experience know that such incidents are perpetrated by a minority of individuals and that the vast majority of Catholic priests and monks are good individuals who strive, who often struggle, each in their own way and according to their physis, to manifest the virtues of compassion, empathy, and humility. That so many writers and readers of such Media propaganda in this our modern world seem to commit the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter* no longer, unfortunately, surprises me.

In respect of personal experience I have to admit that I was somewhat dismayed by a recent report issued by a government sponsored Inquiry Panel. For I personally had known two of the individuals mentioned in that report, knowing from personal experience in a certain monastery that they, and the few others like them over the years, were the exception out of dozens and dozens of other monks and priests there. I was also somewhat dismayed by what I felt was the personal opinion of the authors of that report - stated in their "Conclusions" - that those involved in placing their personal desires before compassion, empathy, and humility, are "likely to be considerably greater than numbers cited in the convictions" since no evidence was presented to substantiate such an opinion. Another example of individuals committing the fallacy of *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*? Probably.

But why does someone who has developed a somewhat paganus weltanschauung – the mystical individualistic numinous way of pathemathos – now defend a supra-personal organization such as the Roman Catholic Church? Because I from personal experience appreciate that for all its many faults – recent and otherwise – and despite my disagreement regarding some of its teachings it still on balance does, at least in my fallible opinion, presence – as it has for centuries presenced – aspects of the numinous and which presencing has over centuries, again in my fallible opinion, had a beneficial affect on many human beings.

As I wrote some years ago in respect of visiting my father's grave in Africa:

"Once I happened to be travelling to an area which colonial and imperialist Europeans formerly described as part of 'darkest Africa'. Part of this travel involved a really long journey on unpaved roads by bus from an urban area. You know the type of thing – an unreliable weekly or sporadic service in some old vehicle used by villagers to take themselves (and often their produce and sometimes their livestock) to and from an urban market and urban-dwelling relatives. On this service, to a remote area, it [seemed to be] the custom – before the journey could begin – for someone to stand at the front and say a Christian prayer with every passenger willingly joining in.

It was quite touching. As was the fact that, at the village where I stayed (with a local family) near that grave, everyone went to Church on a Sunday, wearing the best clothes they could, and there was a real sense (at least to me) of how their faith helped them and gave them some guidance for the better, for it was as if they, poor as they were, were in some way living, or were perhaps partly an embodiment of, the ethos expressed by the Sermon of the Mount, and although I no longer shared their Christian faith, I admired them and respected their belief and understood what that faith seemed to have given them.

Who was – who am – I to try and preach to them, to judge them and that faith? I was – I am – just one fallible human being who believes he may have some personal and fallible answers to certain questions; just one person among billions aware of his past arrogance and his suffering-causing mistakes." [1]



Is to not judge others without a personal knowing of them, to not commit fallacies such as *a dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*, and to allow for personal expiation, perhaps to presence the numinous in at least one small and quite individual way? Personally, I am inclined to believe it is.

Pietatis fons immense, ἐλέησον  
Noxas omnes nostras pelle, ἐλέησον [2]

2.x.18

ooo

[1] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2012/10/30/just-my-fallible-views-again/>

[2] "Immeasurable origin of piety, have mercy. Banish all our faults, have mercy." Kyrie Orbis Factor.

Although the Greek phrase Κύριε ἐλέησον is considered to be a Christian doxology, deriving from the Old Testament, it is possible that it was a common phrase in Greco-Roman culture, with origins dating back to the classical period, for it occurs in the Discourses of Epictetus – Book II, vii, 13 – in relation to a discussion about divination,

καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἐπικαλούμενοι δεόμεθα αὐτοῦ κύριε ἐλέησον

and in our invocations to the theos our bidding is: Master, have mercy.

ooooooo

## Part Two

### Expiation And Penance

Two of the guiding practical principles of living as a Roman Catholic seem to me, on the basis of personal experience and fallible understanding, to be expiation and penance, related as they are to what was termed the Sacrament of Confession – now re-named the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation – and thence related to one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: that an ordained Priest has the religious

authority [1] to give absolution for the "sins" [2] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation, but which absolution is dependant on the person making a full and truthful confession and being repentant.

Such personal confession, penance, and expiation, are evidential of how a practising Catholic interacts with the Divine and is thus personally reminded of what is spiritual, eternal, numinous, and beyond the causal everyday world. As I wrote in my essay *Numinous Expiation*,

"One of the many problems regarding both The Numinous Way and my own past which troubles me – and has troubled me for a while – is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done [...]

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous – some sacred and venerated – place or site." [3]

This personal – and via the Confessional, this priestly – connexion to the Divine, with the attendant penitence, penance, personal expiation, seems to me to have been somewhat neglected when non-Catholics, and even some Catholics criticize the Roman Catholic Church for their past response to those accused of placing their personal (often sexual) desires before compassion, empathy, and humility.

That is, such criticism is secular; based on what is temporal, causal, such as some secular law or some personal emotive reaction, with the spiritual – the eternal – dimension to mortal life unconsidered. Which spiritual dimension is for Catholics based on allowing for personal expiation by spiritual means such as confession, penitence, and penance.

This allowance for such personal expiation by such spiritual means is what, according to my fallible understanding, informed the treatment by the Catholic hierarchy of many of those accused of placing their personal desires before obedience to their God.

For judgement according to such a spiritual dimension was, rightly or wrongly, often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment. Understood thus, there were no – to use a vernacular term – "cover-ups", just the application of certain spiritual considerations, considerations which are the foundations of the Catholic faith based as such considerations are on the belief in the Eternal Life – in Heaven or in Hell – which awaits all mortals, one portal to such an Eternal Life in Heaven being, according to Catholic faith, the sacrament of confession.

Another aspect of this Catholic priority of the spiritual over the secular is the sanctity (the seal) of the confessional and which sanctity is adjudged to be more important than secular laws relating, for example, to disclosure of or information regarding actions deemed to be criminal.

As for my personal opinions on the matter, I have none, for who am I – with my decades of hubris, my knowledge of my plenitude of mistakes – to judge others, to judge anyone? I have tried to rationally understand both the secular and the spiritual dimensions involved, having personal experience of both, and as so often these days remain somewhat perplexed by our human nature and by the need so many humans, myself included, still have for a belief in a spiritual dimension whereby we can connect ourselves to the numinous, to the Divine – however the Divine is presented to and in us – enabling us to perhaps find some peace, some happiness, some solace, some answers, among the turmoil, the suffering, the chngement, of the secular world.

My portal to the spiritual remains 'the way of pathei-mathos', the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way devoid of mythoi and anthropomorphic deities.

Perhaps it would be easier to believe in God, to accept again the Catholic expiation of the sacraments of Confession and the Mass. It would perhaps be even easier to accept some tangible votive wordless means in the form of offering some paganus propitiation, some libation, some talismata left, at some numinous paganus site.

But as Aeschylus so well-expressed it,

ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν  
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:  
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων  
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν  
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει [4]

What is now, came to be  
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.  
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,  
No unburnt offering  
Can charm away that firm resolve.

Which type of sentiment I feel philosophers such as Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius also sought to express.

4.x.18

ooo

[1] Qv. John 20:22-23,

λάβετε πνεῦμα ἅγιον ἃν τινων ἀφῆτε τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἀφέωνται  
αὐτοῖς ἃν τινων κρατῆτε κεκράτηνται

Receive Halig Spiritus: if you release anyone from their errors,  
they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto.

In regard to the term Spiritus, in my commentary on John 1:31 I wrote:

τὸ πνεῦμα. Almost without exception, since Wycliffe's Bible the Greek here has been translated as "the spirit", although the ASV [the Anglo-Saxon Version] has gast (gast of heofenum), whence the later English word 'ghost'. However, given what the terms 'spirit' and 'ghost' – both in common usage, and as a result of over a thousand years of Christian exegesis – now impute, it is apposite to offer an alternative and one which is germane to the milieu of the Gospels or which at least suggests something of the numinosity presenced, in this instance, via the Gospel of John. Given that the transliteration pneuma – with its modern association with terms such as pneumatic – does not

unequivocally suggest the numinous, I have chosen spiritus, as referenced in respect of gast in Wright's *Anglo-Saxon And Old English Vocabularies*.

In regard to the translation Halig Spiritus, in my commentary on John 5:33 I wrote:

I have here used the Old English word Halig – as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' – to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* – in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' – may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized.

[2] As I have noted in several essays, and in my translation of the Gospel of John, I prefer to translate the Greek term ἀμαρτία not by the conventional 'sin' but rather by 'error' or 'mistake'. As I wrote in the essay *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin – so far discovered – is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

Ʒæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn Ʒæt mon Ʒæs

wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius is cogitare, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect – an error, wrong – to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as Beowulf, the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: "Let he who has never made a mistake [ Αναμαρτητος ] throw the first stone at her."

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἀμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those."

The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2013/04>

/26/exegesis-and-translation/ and was included as an Appendix to my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander* (ISBN 978-1495470684)

[3] The essay is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/numinous-expiation/>

[4] Agamemnon, 67-71

---

## Persecution And War

### A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then – again for a while – at a Catholic boarding school, I remember the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who – after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry – escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still  
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]  
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,  
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]  
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers  
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's – during The Troubles – ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's – before the Good Friday Agreement – visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

### **War And Combat**

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve – by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury – intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my



own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

## Authority And Society

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with their being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance,

unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφαι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Đa sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sarig  
þæt he ne meahte ongemong oðrum mannum bion  
(XXXV, 6)

9.ix.18

ooo

[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos

is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] "Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos". *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Fifth edition. ISBN 978-1484096642.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015.

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 516

---

### **Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West**

The letter written by Pope Francis, dated 1° de enero de 2019 and sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, seems to me to encapsulate two of the metaphysical contradictions of the modern Western world in regard to the numinous and the profane.

For in the letter Pope Francis, commenting on what the Media has described as "the scandal of clerical abuse" within the Roman Catholic Church, wrote that

La credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos pecados y crímenes, pero especialmente por la voluntad de querer disimularlos y esconderlos. [1]

and also used Biblical quotations in support of his arguments.

The use of the phrase pecados y crímenes - sins and crimes - seems to indicate an acceptance of the metaphysical equality of Church and State: of a sin, as defined by the teachings of the Church, and of a crime as defined in laws made by some State [2].

### **Sins And Crimes: Sacred And Secular**

Pope Francis provides the context for one metaphysical contradiction, for in respect of the response he believes is required regarding such "sins

and crimes" he writes

Hoy se nos pide una nueva presencia en el mundo conforme a la Cruz de Cristo, que se cristalice en servicio a los hombres y mujeres de nuestro tiempo [3]

That is, there should be a change, a new presencing, and one that serves the people now; the people of our epoch, of our age, of the 'times' in which we now live.

This is the epoch in which the Media, using such expressions as a "culture of abuse" - cultura del abuso - can question the credibility of the Roman Catholic Church, and by repetition of particular instances of abuse and the reporting of other ones, demand not only a response from the hierarchy of the Church but a response that conforms to the popular, or to the Media created, expectations of the epoch. Which expectations are that secular justice - as understood and as implemented by the State - has a higher priority than *judicium divinum*, the divine justice of God or of the gods.

Which divine justice was, at least according to my fallible understanding and as I noted in part two of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, "often considered more important than secular recompense and secular punishment" especially as personal confession to a Priest, personal penitence, and undertaking the penance prescribed were, in the Roman Catholic Church, a connexion to the Divine. Hence why many of those who, via the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation, confessed to abuse were not "publicly named and shamed" by the Catholic hierarchy, were not brought to the attention of State authorities, but instead given penance and, in some instances, quietly moved and expected to begin a new penitential life in the service of God.

That Pope Francis uses the expression cultura del abuso and writes that la credibilidad de la Iglesia se ha visto fuertemente cuestionada y debilitada por estos *pecados y crímenes* suggests to me at least two things. First, that the move toward the change he suggests is in part at least placatory, in conformity with our epoch with its powerful secular Media and its powerful modern secular States; and second that the religious, the numinous, the spiritual, balance presenced for millennia by aspects of the Roman Catholic Church [4] - the devotion to the sacred over and above the secular - is continuing to be lost within the Roman

Catholic Church, with *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State now apparently considered by the Pope as metaphysically equal. Hence why in a speech to the Roman Curia in December 2018 he said that those who abused children should "hand themselves over to human justice." [5]

## **A Revealed Religion**

The second metaphysical contradiction, between the sacred and the profane in the modern world, which the Papal letter reveals is the unsurprising and traditional use of Biblical quotations in support of, and to frame, the presented suggestions and argument.

This reliance on written texts and reliance on their exegesis and thus on the varied interpretations that result [6] is an implicit part of all revealed religions from Judaism, to Christianity, to Islam. Since these interpretations can vary and have varied over the centuries the result is schism, reformation and counter-reformation, leading as these did in the past to such things as the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, and the persecution and martyrdom of Catholics, by a tyrannos named Henry; and leading as they have in more modern times, to the reforms of the Second Vatican Council, and to the proliferation of Christian sects and denominations who have diverse views about such matters as same-gender love and abortion.

Such reliance on such texts, such varying interpretations, are as I have noted elsewhere the fundamental weakness of revealed religions [7] with, in my fallible view, the sacred - the numinous - unable to fully be presenced by such religions.

Thus it does not surprise me that the Roman Catholic Church apparently now considers *judicium divinum* and the secular justice of some State as metaphysically equal since the conflict between varying interpretations, the apparent desire for placatory reforms - of being "a new presence in the world" - as a consequence of Media attention, and the increasing move away "in this epoch" from a belief in the superiority of *judicium divinum* (the primacy of the sacred) are necessary consequences of the dialectic of exegesis.

Which is one reason why my personal spiritual belief is now not that of Catholicism even though I sense that Catholicism does still presence

some aspects of the numinous.

Instead, I incline toward an apprehension of the divine, the sacred, which is paganus and thus individual, undogmatic, and empathic, since my paganus metaphysics is that of

(i) an (often wordless) awareness of ourselves as a fallible mortal, as a microcosmic connexion to other mortals, to other life, to Nature, and to the Cosmos beyond our world, and (ii) a new civitas, and one not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous. [8]

7.i.19

Extract from a reply to someone  
who enquired about a Papal Letter in relation to my text  
In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church

ooo

[1] "The credibility of the Church has been seriously questioned and undermined by these sins and crimes but especially by a desire to hide or to disguise them."

The official Vatican translation is "The Church's credibility has been seriously undercut and diminished by these sins and crimes, but even more by the efforts made to deny or conceal them."

[2] By the term State is meant the concept of both (i) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (ii) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area.

[3] "Today, what is asked of us is to be a new presence in the world that, in conformity with the Cross of Christ, is made clear in service to the men and women of our epoch."

The official Vatican translation is "What is being asked of us today is a new presence in the world, conformed to the cross of Christ, one that takes concrete shape in service to the men and women of our time."

[4] As I noted in part one of my *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*,

"Listening to Messe De La Nativité: Gaudeamus Hodie; Puer Natus Est Nobis - performed by Ensemble Gilles Binchois - I am so reminded how the Roman Catholic Church inspired such numinosity, such beauty, century following century. For it is as if such music presented the Divine to thus remind us, we fallible error-prone mortals, of another realm beyond the material and beyond our own mortal desires."

[5] Catholic News Agency, December 21, 2018.

[6] Qv. my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, and *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[7] Qv. (i) *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*; (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*; (iii) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*.

[8] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

---



## **Catholic Still In Spirit?**

Perhaps I remain, partially at least, a Catholic in spirit – in my heart – though not, most of the time, in words and deeds. For while I intellectually and empathically disagree with the teachings of the Catholic Church on many matters – such as homosexuality, contraception, and on divorcées who have remarried being excluded from Holy Communion (unless they have resorted to a Papal Annulment) – I still find myself in my inner weakness not only sometimes frequenting the Lady Chapel of my nearest RC Church – lighting a candle, kneeling, and in reverent silent contemplative prayer remembering, in the felt presence of The Blessed Virgin Mary, those now dead loved ones such as my mother and father and Sue and Francis, and those other women hurt by my selfishness – but also traveling several times a year to where Gregorian chant is sung and where the Tridentine Mass is celebrated, bringing as such Latin chant and such a Latin Mass still do, in me, a renewed awareness of the numinous and a renewal of such humility as I strive – and sometimes still so often fail – to remember and feel.

There seems to me no intricate and difficult interior problem here derived from my somewhat pagan way of *pathei-mathos*, for that way is essentially – for me, even born as it is from my own *pathei-mathos* – rather intellectual, a *perceivation*, lacking as it does something outward, practical, supra-personal, and communal, to presence the numinous and thus affect one's very being in a spiritual way. So I seem to now exist – and have for several years existed – between two worlds: apparently emotionally needing something practical, living, and spiritual beyond myself and my intellectualism, and yet knowing in a rather unemotional manner that it is the way of *pathei-mathos*, and not Catholicism, which is my *weltanschauung*.

No intricate and difficult interior problem, no inner dichotomy, because I know the many flaws in my *weltanschauung* and in myself; and one cannot intellectually create some-thing – manufacture some-thing devoid of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\acute{\eta}$  – to presence the numinous. For it seems to me that such a presencing has to evolve, organically, over causal time, because it has been wordlessly presenced in other mortals and then kept alive because also felt by some of a newer generation. Will – can – such a presencing of the numinous arise from that way of *pathei-mathos*? Most probably not, intellectual and so very personal as it is.

So the need for some inner, numinous, sustenance remains; for fulfilling as a lot of classical music – such as the Cantatas of JS Bach – is and are, and fulfilling as walks alone in wild and rural Nature are, I sense a yearning in me for something more: some wordless intimation of the Divine which betakes me so far away from my still egoistic self that I am both awed and humbled again, as I often was in Winter wandering a darkened cloister as a monk in that quiet contemplative time between Matins and Lauds.

2015

Extract From A Letter To A Friend

---

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2015-2019

The essays are issued under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International license  
and can be copied and distributed according to the terms of that license

All translations by DW Myatt

---

# **Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos**

## **Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief**

David Myatt

### **Contents**

- Prefatory Note
- I Numinous Expiation
- II Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God

#### Part One

°Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective

#### Part Two

°Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

°Jurisprudence and Society

°The Modern State

°Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos

#### Part Three

°Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals

°Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress

#### Part Four

°Ontology and Denotatum

°The Simple Way of Harmony

#### Part Five

°A Very Personal Conclusion

- III Blue Reflected Starlight
- IV Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations
- Appendix - Glossary of Terms and Greek Words

## **Prefatory Note**

This compilation is of some letters and essays of mine written during the past two years (2012 - 2013) dealing with questions of religion, redemption, expiation, humility, and spirituality in general, and thus compliments both the collection of my writings about the philosophy of pathei-mathos in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* and my autobiography *Myngath*.

All translations, and interpretations of the meaning of texts (Quranic, poetic and otherwise), are mine, and, in the interests of clarity, I have included a glossary of terms and Greek words - taken from *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* - given that (i) I tend to use certain Greek words to express my meaning, and (ii) I often have a particular philosophical interpretation or understanding of certain English terms.

David Myatt  
2013

In Loving Remembrance of Sue, died 4th April 1993  
In Loving Remembrance of Frances, died 29th May 2006

o o o

## I Numinous Expiation

One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done. For, in the person of empathy, of compassion, of honour, a knowledge and understanding of dishonour done, of the suffering one has caused - perhaps before one became such a person of compassion, honour, and empathy - is almost invariably the genesis of strong personal feelings such as remorse, grief, and sorrow. The type of strong feelings that Christopher Marlowe has Iarbus, King of Gaetulia, voice at the end of the play *The Tragedie of Dido Queene of Carthage*, written c.1587:

Cursed Iarbas, die to expiate  
The grief that tires upon thine inward soul.

One of the many benefits of an organized theistic religion, such as Christianity or Islam or Judaism, is that mechanisms of personal expiation exist whereby such feelings can be placed in context and expiated by appeals to the supreme deity. In Judaism, there is Teshuvah culminating in Yom Kippur, the day of expiation/reconciliation. In Catholicism, there is the sacrament of confession and penance. In Islam, there is personal dua to, and reliance on, Allah Ar-Rahman, Ar-Raheem, As-Salaam.

Even pagan religions and ways had mechanisms of personal expiation for wrong deeds done, often in the form of propitiation; the offering of a sacrifice, perhaps, or compensation by the giving or the leaving of a valuable gift or votive offering at some numinous - some sacred and venerated - place or site.

One motivation, in the case of pagan religions and ways, for a person to seek expiation is fear of *wrake*; fear of the retribution or of the misfortune, that - from the gods - might befall them or their descendants in this life. Similarly, for those acceptive of an all-knowing, all-seeing supreme deity - or even of the Buddhist mechanism of karma - there is also fear of *wrake*; fear of the punishment, the retribution, the misfortune, that might await them in the next life; or, in the case of Buddhism, the type of life that might result when next they are reborn.

As the Owl explains in the mediæval English religious allegory *The Owl and the Nightingale*,

ich wat þar schal beo niþ & wrake

I can see when there shall be strife and retribution [1]

All such religious mechanisms of expiation, whatever the theology and regardless of the motivation of the individual in seeking such expiation, are or can be cathartic; restorative, healing. But if there is no personal belief in either a supreme deity or in deities, how then to numinously make reparation, propitiation, and thus to not only expiate such feelings as remorse, grief, and sorrow but also and importantly offset the damage one's wrong actions have caused, since by their very nature such suffering-causing actions are ὕβρις and not only result in harm, in people suffering, but also upset the natural balance.

In truth, I do not know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation. I can only conject, surmise. One of my conjectures is enantiodromia; of the process, mentioned by Diogenes Laërtius and attributed to Heraclitus, of a wholeness arising both before and after discord and division [2]. This wholeness is the healthy, the numinous, interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings - beyond πόλεμος and ὕβρις and thus beyond ἔρις; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. As Heraclitus intimated, according to another quotation attributed to him -

*εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]*

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

But what, then, in practical personal terms are this wholeness and this process termed enantiodromia? To me, this wholeness is a knowing and an acceptance of both the importance of the numinous principle of Δίκη [4] and the necessity of wu-wei [5] - and a knowing which empathy can provide - and thence a desire to live life in a non-interfering manner consistent with empathy, compassion, reason, honour, and humility. And it is this very knowing, this very desire to live in such a manner, which is enantiodromia; which is cathartic, restorative, healing; with a natural humility and the cultivation and practice of reason - σωφρονεῖν, a fair and balanced judgement - being the essence of this personal process, the essence of enantiodromia.

For the human virtue of humility is essential in us for us not to repeat our errors of ὕβρις, a humility which our πάθει μάθος makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, in a very personal sense. For we are aware of, we should remember, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow.

In addition, by and through humility, we do what we do not because we expect some reward, or some forgiveness, given by some supra-personal supreme Being, or have some idealized duty to such a Being or to some abstraction (such as some nation, some State) but because it is in our very nature to do an act of compassion, a deed of honour: to do something which is noble and selfless. That is, we act, not out of duty, not out of a desire for Heaven or Jannah, or enlightenment or some other “thing” we have posited – not from any emotion, desire or motive, not because some scripture or some revelation or some Buddha says we should – but because we have lost the illusion of our self-contained, personal, identity, lost our Earth-centric, human-centric, perspective, lost even the causal desire to be strive to something different, and instead just *are*: that is, we are just one microcosmic living mortal connexion between all life, on Earth, and in the Cosmos. For our very nature, as human beings, is a Cosmic nature – a natural part of the unfolding, of the naturally and numinously changing, Cosmos.

Thus a personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity.

This personal humility inclines us toward σωφρονεῖν; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste. Toward a balanced judgement and thence toward a balanced life of humility, wu-wei, and a knowing of the wisdom of Δίκη.

There is nothing especially religious here, nor any given or necessary praxis. No techniques; no supplication to some-thing or to some posited Being. No expectation of reward, in this life or some posited next life. Only an interior personal change, an attempt to live in a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life.

DWM  
February 2012

### Notes

[1] v.1194. The text is that of the Cotton Caligula MS in the British Library as transcribed by JWH Atkins in *The Owl and the Nightingale*, Cambridge University Press, 1922.

[2] The quotation from Diogenes Laërtius is: πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ’ εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

My translation is: *All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.*

As I mentioned in my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - *ἐναντιοδρομίας* - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[3] Fragment 80. qv. my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*

As I noted in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, it is interesting that:

"in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) married a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that *πόλεμος* accompanied *ὑβρις* - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing *ἔρις*."

[4] As mentioned in my *Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, *Δίκη* is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own numinous culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of *ὑβρις* and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

*Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν  
μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει*



In respect of Δίκη, I write and spell it thus – in this modern way and with a capital Δ – to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning – σωφρονεῖν – that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις – between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of The Numinous Way "to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, is ὕβρις. In practice, this is the cultivation of a certain (an acausal, numinous) perspective – that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

I first became acquainted with the concept of wu-wei when, as a youth living in the Far East, I studied Taoism and a learnt a martial art based on Taoism. Thus it might be fair to assume that Taoism may well have influenced, to some degree, the development of my weltanschauung.

ooo

## II Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God Some Personal Musings

### Introduction

For the past three or so years, as I developed my 'numinous way' and then last year refined it into the philosophy of pathei-mathos, I have reflected more and more on questions concerning good, evil, honour, God, and religion and ethics in general; related as these matters are (at least according to my fallible understanding) to our nature, and possible development, as human beings, and thence to matters such as society, culture, and the jurisprudence by which modern societies function, or endeavour or aspire to function; and manifesting, as answers to such questions should, at least some explanations concerning the evidence that we human beings possess, and have possessed for thousands upon thousands of years, a paradoxical character, capable of - and having done - both honourable and dishonourable deeds, of being both 'good' and 'bad'.

Thus some of the questions of concern are: (i) what is 'good' and 'bad'; (ii) have the definitions and thence the theology and epistemology and the morality of religions, over millennia, enabled more and more of us to avoid doing or causing what is 'bad'; (iii) what, if anything, can or perhaps should replace such definitions, such theology, such epistemology, such morality - such religions - for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the guidance so offered; (iv) does jurisprudence - and thence The State - offer an acceptable alternative; and, perhaps most importantly, as I have endeavoured to intimate in some other recent musings, (v) can we as a species change, sans a belief in some reward or the threat of punishment - be such karmic, eschatological, or deriving from something such as a State - or "are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?" [1]

Today - thousands of years after the births of Lao Tzu, of the Buddha, of Moses, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Muhammad - horrid things still happen every minute of every day to people who do not deserve them, who have done nothing dishonourable. Horrid things caused by other human beings, and it certainly

seems to me that we, as a species - en masse, world-wide - cannot seem to prevent ourselves from doing what is bad, here understanding and accepting, initially at least, 'the bad' as that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others. All we seem to have done is manufacture more excuses for ourselves and for others in order to try and justify the harm done, and the killings and the suffering caused, and thus

"...latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible." [2]

But is 'the bad' really that which harms or kills, or causes suffering to, others, and if so, is it necessary - moral - to qualify this understanding by appending 'without just cause' to it, and what, therefore - as others, from the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius to Augustine of Hippo to Thomas Aquinas and beyond, have sought to define - is a 'just cause' so that 'the bad' is then understood to be "that which harms or kills or causes suffering to others without just cause".

This essay presents some musings of mine regarding such questions.

DWM  
April 2013

## **Part One**

### **Good and Evil - An Early Christian Perspective**

Given the influence of Christianity over individuals in the West during the past two millennia, especially in terms of eschatology and jurisprudence, it seems apposite to consider how the concepts of 'good' and 'evil' are presented in

Christian scripture.

In Genesis 3.5 it is written that:

ἦδει γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐν ἧ ἅν ἡμέρᾳ φάγητε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, διανοιχθήσονται  
ὕμῶν οἱ ὀφθαλμοί, καὶ ἔσεσθε ὡς θεοὶ γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ  
πονηρόν. [3]

What, therefore, is meant by γινώσκοντες καλὸν καὶ πονηρόν? Most translations - modern and otherwise - provide something akin to "knowing good and evil" which we, after two thousand years, presume to associate with some theological ideation such as 'the forces/realm of good' contrasted with (or verses) 'the forces/realm of evil' as if both have or can have an existence independent of the physical world and independent of ourselves, an existence or a force associated, or seemingly associated, with a being described, in the Hebrew scriptures, as שָׁרָפִי - a serpent - and in LXX as ὄφις, a mythological creature familiar to readers of Hesiod's *Theogony* [4] and from myths and legends concerning the oracle at Delphi and the Πύθων, which is both curious and interesting given that שָׁרָפִי can signify divination (qv. Genesis 44.15, for example) and the whisper (the hiss) of a soothsayer or an enchantress.

But, in respect of this 'good and evil', might the Greek of LXX - and the Hebrew text - suggest something other than such a theological ideation? That is, how might the Greek text have been understood in its time?

The Greek of LXX contrasts κάλος with πονηρόν. Now, κάλος is classically understood (as often in Homer) as 'what is pleasing' (as in pleasing to look upon) and that which is considered beneficial and/or admirable (as in admirable deeds); whence what is beautiful/healthy and what is noble or honourable. Classically understood, πονηρόν is 'wearisome' (as in Hesiod, for instance in reference to the tasks that Hercules has to endure) and also what is considered dishonourable or cowardly, as in Sophocles, *Philoctetes* v.437 - πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς αἰεὶ (battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable).

The classical meaning of the Genesis text - of the Greek still understood at the time of LXX (c. 250 BCE) and before later interpretations [5] - might therefore seem to suggest some contrast between what is beneficial/admirable/beautiful/noble/honourable and what is wearisome/cowardly/dishonourable.

Interestingly, the sense of the Hebrew text of Genesis 3.5 seems to follow the sense of the Greek, or vice versa [6] - יָדַעַי טוֹב וְרָע . That is, "knowing tov and rah," with טוֹב suggesting pleasing, pleasant, beautiful; and רָע suggesting adversity, unpleasant, harmful, injurious.

In Genesis 8.21, πονηρόν also occurs, again usually translated as some abstract

'evil' - man's heart is evil from his youth, and so on - even though the classical/Hebrew understanding of the term suggests the former more personal sense of dishonourable/injurious, as does its occurrence in the New Testament, as, for example, in Luke 6.45 where it is - interestingly - contrasted not with κάλος but with ἀγαθός, and where the context - of a healthy (a good, κάλος) tree not bearing rotten/bad (σαπρός) fruit, καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν - also suggests not some abstract (demonic) 'evil' but a dishonourable (a bad, cowardly) person bringing forth some-thing bad, burdensome, dishonourable, and thus unhealthy, as rotten fruit is unhealthy and harmful, and with Luke 6.43-5 therefore translated thus:

For no healthy tree brings forth rotten fruit just as a rotten tree cannot bring forth healthy fruit. For each tree is judged by its fruit. A good person from the store of good in their heart brings forth what is good, and a bad person from their bad store brings forth what is bad; for it is because of an overflowing heart that the mouth speaks.

Οὐ γὰρ ἐστὶν δένδρον καλὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν σαπρὸν, οὐδὲ πάλιν δένδρον σαπρὸν ποιοῦν καρπὸν καλόν, ἕκαστον γὰρ δένδρον ἐκ τοῦ ἰδίου καρποῦ γινώσκεται· ὁ ἀγαθὸς ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ θησαυροῦ τῆς καρδίας προφέρει τὸ ἀγαθόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ προφέρει τὸ πονηρόν· ἐκ γὰρ περισσεύματος καρδίας λαλεῖ τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ

This 'healthy tree' and 'rotten fruit' make sense, for how can a tree be evil? Similarly, the contrast of πονηρόν with ἀγαθός also makes sense in referring to a bad person and good person, for ἀγαθός is classically understood as brave; honourable; well-bred (as often in Homer) and as implying a personal quality, such as prowess, excellence, in some-thing - or good at some-thing - as in The Agamemnon of Aeschylus:

ὅστις δ' ἀγαθὸς προβατογνώμων,  
οὐκ ἔστι λαθεῖν ὄμματα φωτός,  
τὰ δοκοῦντ' εὐφρονος ἐκ διανοίας  
ὕδαρεϊ σαίνειν φιλότῃτι.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd  
A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship  
Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement. (vv. 795-798)

and as in Oedipus Tyrannus by Sophocles:

ὄρᾳς ἴν' ἤκεις, ἀγαθὸς ὦν γνώμην ἀνὴρ,  
τοῦμόν παριεῖς καὶ καταμβλύνων κέαρ;

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason  
By me giving way and blunting my passion. (vv. 687-8)

The scriptural contrast of rottenness and health is also evident, for instance, in Romans 12.21:

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ ἀλλὰ νίκα ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν

where ἀγαθός is contrasted with κακός rather than with πονηρόν. Although the verse is often translated along the lines of 'Do not let evil conquer you, instead conquer evil with good,' classically understood, κακός is what is 'bad' in the sense of some-thing rotten or unhealthy, or - the opposite of κάλος - what is displeasing to see. κακός is also what is unlucky, a misfortune, and/or injurious, as for example in The Agamemnon

τὸ μὲν γυναῖκα πρῶτον ἄρσενος δίχα  
ῥῆσθαι δόμοις ἔρημον ἔκπαγλον κακόν

Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -  
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune (vv. 862-3)

Given the sense of ἀγαθός previously mentioned (with reference for example to Luke 6.45) and this sense of κακός, then Romans 12.21 might suggest: "Do not let what is rotten win; instead, overpower what is rotten with what is good," and good in the sense of beneficial and healthy, so that an alternative would be "Do not let what is harmful win; instead, overpower what is harmful with what is healthy."

Similarly, Romans 12.17 - with its contrast of κακός and κάλος - would imply:

Do not render what is bad with what is bad; rather, show concern for what all see is good.

μηδενὶ κακὸν ἀντὶ κακοῦ ἀποδιδόντες, προνοοῦμενοι καλὰ ἐνώπιον πάντων ἀνθρώπων·

Understood thus, the impression is not of 'fire and brimstone' preaching but of something rather gentle, something much more human and appealing and understanding of human nature; something evident, for example, in the well-known passage (Romans 13.10) ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη: love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law.

Furthermore, it is this love which is healthy and good; which can 'overpower what is harmful', what is bad.

What these examples reveal - and many other examples from Christian scripture could be adduced - is not abstract, impersonal, theological concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something personal that individuals can relate to and understand, and it is tempting therefore to suggest that it was later, and theological, interpretations and interpolations which led to a harsh dichotomy,

an apocalyptic eschatology, a 'war' between an abstract 'good' and 'evil', and that with such interpretations and interpolations - much in evidence in the persecution of alleged heretics - the simple gospel message of the health of love was somehow lost for a while, to be, later on, re-expressed by people such as William Penn, who wrote, in his *Some Fruits of Solitude*, "Let us then try what love can do."

## Notes

[1] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2012

[2] qv. *A Slowful Learning, Perhaps*. 2012

[3] Septuaginta - Vetus Testamentum. c. 250 BCE.

[4] qv. the Chimaera (vv. 319ff), described as having three heads, one of which - ἢ δ' ὄφις - was a serpent, a dragon: ὄμιθεν δὲ δράκων.

[5] The current consensus is that LXX was written around 250 BCE, give or take a few decades. This is the Hellenistic era of Euclid and Archimedes; a period when Homer was still recited, and the classic tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and others, some two or more centuries before, were still understood and appreciated, just as the language of Shakespeare - and his plays - are understood and appreciated today. This appreciation of classical Greek literature continued into the Roman era and beyond, with the cultured Cicero, for example, often explaining classical Greek terms for his Latin readers, and with Marcus Aurelius - Roman Emperor a century after the time of Jesus of Nazareth - writing his 'meditations', Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν - in the same (possibly Attic derived) κοινή Greek as that of LXX and the New Testament.

It is therefore seems likely that the scribes of LXX - and possibly those of the New Testament - were also familiar with the earlier classical literature.

[6] The date of the Hebrew scriptures has been much discussed. The earliest fragments of extant texts of both LXX and the Hebrew scriptures currently known suggest that LXX is slightly (but not much) older than the written text of the Hebrew scriptures of which papyrus fragments survive. However, according to Jewish aural tradition the scrolls of the Torah were first written c. 1000 BCE and thus would predate LXX by many centuries.

## Part Two

### Good and Evil - A Muslim Perspective

The classical and the early Christian sense of a human, and a natural, and not an abstract, dogmatical, good and bad, briefly outlined in part one, is also found in Islam: in the Quran, in the Sunnah, and in Shariah. For the sense of 'the bad' - الْخَبِيثُ - is of what is rotten, unhealthy, dirty, unclean, defective; with the sense of 'the good', of 'good things' - الطَّيِّبَاتِ - being pleasing, pure, healthy, natural, beautiful, noble.

Consider, for example, Surah 5, Ayah 100 of the Quran:

قُلْ لَا يَسْتَوِي الْخَبِيثُ وَالطَّيِّبُ وَلَوْ أَعْجَبَكَ كَثْرَةُ  
الْخَبِيثِ فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ يَتَأُولَىٰ أَلَلْبَبِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿١٠٠﴾

A fallible 'interpretation of meaning' [1] is:

"The dirty and the clean are not alike even though, being ubiquitous, what is dirty may entice [ أَعْجَبَكَ ] you." [2]

In Surah 61, Ayah 12, 'good' - طَيِّبَةً - is what is beautiful, pleasant:

يَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَيُدْخِلْكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا  
الْأَنْهَارُ وَمَسَاكِنَ طَيِّبَةً فِي جَنَّاتٍ عَدْنٍ ذَلِكَ الْفَوْزُ  
الْعَظِيمُ ﴿١٢﴾

" [Allah] will forgive your transgressions [ ذُنُوبَكُمْ ] and guide you to Jannah wherein are rivers, cascading down, and those beautiful dwellings set within perpetually-flowering gardens. And this is the success that matters." [Interpretation of meaning]

Consider also Surah 2, Ayah 267:



يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَنْفِقُوا مِنْ طَيِّبَاتِ مَا كَسَبْتُمْ وَمِمَّا  
 أَخْرَجْنَا لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ۖ وَلَا تَيَمَّمُوا الْخَبِيثَ مِنْهُ تُنْفِقُونَ وَلَسْتُمْ  
 بِآخِذِيهِ إِلَّا أَنْ تُغْمِضُوا فِيهِ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَنِيٌّ حَمِيدٌ ﴿٢١٧﴾

"From what We give you from the earth and from the good things you have earned - disburse; but do not look toward [ تَيَمَّمُوا ] disbursing those defective things, which you would never take [for yourself] unless your eyes were closed." [Interpretation of meaning]

As with the New Testament, what these examples reveal - and many other examples could be adduced - is not abstract concepts of 'good' and 'evil' but rather something that is understandable by individuals and related to themselves and the world around them [3].

### **Jurisprudence and Society**

Islam and Christianity have both developed traditions relating to the scope, detail, intent, and the implementation, of the laws necessitated by a society [4] - a jurisprudence - as well as traditions, or doctrines, concerning the nature of the authority that has or asserts it has the power to enforce such laws, and which laws often seek to criminalize 'the bad' and thus offer an interpretation of 'the good' and 'the bad'.

The traditional Christian view, evident in the Catholic tradition, is one of not only canon law but of the exercise of spiritual influence, direct and indirect, over civil authority to the extent, for example, that the Code of Justinian of 529-534 CE begins with *In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi* and (i) enshrined in law the authority of the Church, (ii) enshrined in law the requirement that all persons subject to the jurisdiction of the code be Christian, and thus that society be a Christian one; and (iii) detailed in law what constituted heresy.

For Muslims, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) - the textual sources of which are the Quran and Sunnah - is a legal and an ethical guide to what is good and what is bad; that is, to what is halal (beneficial) and what is haram (harmful) from the perspective of the only success that, for a Muslim, matters: the success of being guided by Allah to dwell in the perpetually-flowering Gardens of Paradise, wherein are rivers, cascading down.

Being a legal as well as an ethical guide, fiqh deals not only with religious worship but also with civil, business, and domestic, matters such as

transactions, ownership, funds, and inheritance, and thus provides a framework for a society whose aim is to assist Muslims who live together in a particular area to know and follow the precepts and the way of life revealed by Muhammad: to do and inspire what is good, and avoid and dissuade others from doing what is bad, تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ (Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anil Munkar) [5].

However, it seems to me that the problem with jurisprudence, Muslim and Christian, is and was our fallible, human, understanding of the revelation, of the original message; a problem classically understood in Islam by the distinction made by Muslim scholars between fiqh - our fallible understanding and attempts at interpretation - and Shariah, the divine and perfect guidance given by Allah, based as fiqh (classical Islamic jurisprudence) is on the principles of acceptance of diversity (of scholarly opinion), on custom [6], and on reasoned deductions by individuals that are stated to be fallible and thus not immutable. A distinction that allows for reasoned change, accepts the necessity of diverse opinions, the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, and manifests both the non-hierarchical nature of the religion of Islam and the original understanding of the good and the bad.

In modern times, in the Muslim world, this necessary distinction between fiqh and Shariah, this allowance for reasoned change based on diverse scholarly opinion, and the necessity of individual independent scholarly judgement in trials, arbitrations, and determining penalties, often seems to be overlooked when attempts are made by governments in Muslim lands to introduce 'Shariah law' with the result that inflexible penal codes and immutable penalties are introduced backed by the claim, contrary to fiqh, that such governments have a mandate to impose and enforce such dogmatical interpretations as are an inevitable part of such government-sponsored codified law.

Even in the past this distinction between fiqh and Shariah, and the need for an acceptance of a diversity of scholarly and reasoned opinion, was often neglected, especially by powerful rulers or ruling cliques, leading to societies which were Muslim in name only where 'the good' came to be more the embodiment of the will or the desire or the need of the powerful, the privileged, than it was of the original religious revelation, and where 'the law' became inflexible, impersonal, and often corrupt, with regular conflict between the powerful, the privileged within a society and/or between societies, and which conflicts were sometimes justified by appeals to a particular religious interpretation. Similarly with Christianity, as shown by the tumultuous conflicts - religious and civil, and causing immense suffering - within the West since the time of Justinian.

Thus does the original meaning - the message - of the revelation seem to become somewhat lost; the message, in the case of Christianity, of love and

humility, of redemption through suffering (crucifixus), of Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ [7]; the message, in the case of Islam, of an individual reliance only on Allah, of Adab [8], of respect for diversity and custom.

Which leads to the question as to whether a jurisprudence based on a spiritual revelation works, given the nature of such a religion and the fact that it seems that our paradoxical human nature and our societies were not effectively changed, and have not been effectively changed, by such jurisprudence, or at least not changed for long. Do these religions - does religion, spirituality, in general - require, demand, that the believers reform, or try to reform, the world? If so, is that contrary to such personal, human, notions of the good and the bad that have been described above? [9] Is two thousand years - in the case of Christianity - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence? Is one and a half thousand years - in the case of Islam - a sufficient time to judge such change, such societies, such jurisprudence?

The problem seems to be that for revelatory religions such as Islam and Christianity the priority is salvation of the individual and thus the distinction made between this, our mortal, life and the next; a priority and a distinction that has, for centuries, been used to explain, and often justify - by individuals, governments, factions, and authorities - harsh deeds and practices, and harsh punishments and policies. Thus, what has tended to occur is that such salvation has become a 'just cause', used for century after century to justify or to try and justify (i) the persecution, torture, and killing of those deemed to be heretics, (ii) wars (bellum iustum), conflicts, and violent religious schisms; and (iii) the harsh treatment of 'non-believers'. All in the name of, for example, 'saving souls', and/or based on the belief, the interpretation, that this is what God has commanded; for such suffering and horrors that are caused or occur in this life are really of lesser importance than being admitted into Heaven. Hence the concepts of martyrdom and of us bearing our misfortunes, our pain, our suffering, the horrors inflicted by others and on others, because of the hope, the promise, the reward, of an everlasting life in eternal bliss.

### **The Modern State**

Such an understanding - such questions and such answers regarding religion and religious jurisprudence - are not new, and led, centuries ago, to the idea of the secular State, to the theory of governance termed liberal democracy, and to a new or at least a revised jurisprudence [10]. That is, to such sentiments as are expressed in the 1776 Declaration of Independence:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted

among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

The focus is not on salvation, not on Heaven or Jannah, but on Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. A focus, a governance, a jurisprudence, and a sentiment, that have certainly changed the West, and some other parts of the world, for the better. As I have mentioned elsewhere:

"The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." [11]

Interestingly, many of the 'multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness' dedicated to helping those within such now secular societies, and many of those trying to improve those societies, are people of faith: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist... Which perhaps explains, or partly explains, why Christianity and, to a lesser extent, Islam have begun, by the necessity of interaction and by social practicalities, to adapt to the changes that the modern State - with its liberal democracy and modern jurisprudence - has wrought over

the past two centuries; changes manifest, for example, not only in an increased standard of living for many (especially in the lands of the West) but also in attitudes, perception, and expectation, especially in relation to human rights. A change that has begun to lead many Christians, and some Muslims, to re-discover the simple message of their respective - and in many ways quite similar - revelations; a change that has led others to reject the more harsh interpretations of their faith and seek reform within their faith (Christian, Jewish, and Muslim); and a change which is leading others to question whether such messages of revelation are even compatible with the rights, the life, the liberty, and the happiness, of certain people, such as those whose love is for someone of the same gender.

### **Good and Evil - The Perspective of Pathei-Mathos**

The pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, often described in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, and often expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, has resulted in an accumulation of insights; what we might with some justification describe as a culture, which, while often redolent of the spiritual, is not religious. That is, not doctrinal, not codified, not organized, and not presenting or manifesting a theology. A culture that is supra-national, containing as it does, among many other treasures, the observations of Lao Tzu, Siddhartha Gautama, Ovid, and Mohandas K. Gandhi; the thoughts of Aeschylus, Sappho, and Sophocles; the writings of Marcus Aurelius and Jane Austen; the allegory, the mystery, of Jesus of Nazareth; and, importantly, the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were forever changed by the experience.

As often in respect of a culture, as with a religion or a spiritual Way of Life, individuals may favour some insights over others, and may and probably will differ over how certain insights should be understood or interpreted. As for me, I find in this vast cultural treasure three important things.

First, an understanding of the impermanence of temporal things; of how abstract ideations - given some practical form and maintained via striving human beings - over decades and centuries always by their nature wreck havoc and cause or contribute to suffering often despite the decent intentions of those who brought them into being and maintain or maintained them; and of how all such forms, in the perspective of millennia, 'hath but a short time to live'.

Second, that even the modern State with its liberal democracy and its jurisprudence and its benefits and positive change, is not only impermanent but also, for some, a cause of suffering, of havoc, and that the benefits and the positive change do not necessarily offset such suffering, such havoc, as are caused, as have been caused, and as may continue to be caused; and that it is

for each one of us to decide how to, or whether to, engage with such an impermanent form, by and for example following the moral advice given some two millennia ago - Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ - and/or by perhaps trying to improve those societies, "in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism."

Third, that there is in this culture of pathei-mathos a particular ethos: the tone of harmony, ἁρμονίη; of a natural balance, or rather of how certain human actions are hubris - ὕβρις - and not only disrupt this needful harmony but also cause or contribute to suffering. Of the importance, and perhaps the primacy, of human love; of how Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris, and of how a lovelorn Polemos follows Hubris around, never requited. Of how the truths of religions and spiritual ways are, in their genesis, basically simple, always numinous, and most probably the same: guides to living in such a way that we can rediscover the natural balance, appreciate the numinous, and avoid hubris.

All of which lead to an understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos [12], as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἁρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human.

For, in effect, the truths concerning honour and dishonour, and of our propensity for both honour and dishonour, are the essence of what we can learn from the supra-national, the living, and the thousands of years old, human culture of pathei-mathos.

## Notes

[1] The fallible interpretations of meaning that are given here are mine.

[2] In respect of لَا تُعْجِبْكَ أَمْوَالُهُمْ وَأَوْلَادُهُمْ - do not let أَعْجَبَكَ , qv. Surah 9, Ayah 85

their wealth and their children enchant you. That is, do not be impressed by their wealth and marvel at their (apparently fine) offspring.

[3] It is to be expected that some, or many, will find this conclusion of mine regarding good and evil in Christian scripture and/or in Islam a controversial one, as no doubt some will query my (fallible) interpretation of the texts, and which interpretations often avoid conventional readings, for three reasons.

First, to hopefully give some readers a sense - an intimation - of the vibrancy, the immediacy, that I find in the texts that I have endeavoured to translate/interpret here, and endeavoured in the past to translate/interpret elsewhere.

Second, as I noted in *Explanation Of Humility and The Need for Tolerance* with respect to the Quran and الرُّعْب :

My, admittedly fallible, view now - after some years of reflexion and study - is that, in an English interpretation of the meaning of a work as revered, and misunderstood, as the Quran, English words in common usage must be carefully chosen, with many common words avoided, and that it would sometimes be better to choose an unusual or even archaic word in order to try and convey something of the sense of the Arabic. Thus, with a careful interpretation common misunderstandings of the text - by non-Muslims unversed in Arabic - can possibly be avoided, especially if - as might be the case with unusual words - the reader has to pause to consider the meaning or make the effort to find the meaning, if only in a glossary appended to the interpretation. A pause and/or an effort that is suited to reading a work revered by millions of people around the world.

Hence why in the matter of Ayah 151 of Surah Al 'Imran, my interpretation of meaning, employing just such an unusual English word with a literary provenance, was:

Into the hearts of they who disbelieve We shall hurl redurre because they, without any authority revealed about such things, associate others with Allah; and for their home: The Fire, that harrowing resting place of the unjust.

Third, to perhaps inspire some to scholarly consider, again, both the text themselves and the accepted interpretation(s) given that in my view translation/interpretation of texts to English from an ancient (no longer spoken) language or from a text revered in the way the Quran is (i) not 'an exact science' but more akin to an art to be approached with (a) an artistic appreciation of what was (in the case of ancient texts) a living vibrant language and in the case of the Quran is a poetic and numinous language, (b) with a certain humility, and (c) with a lack of preconceptions about the accepted 'meaning' of certain words and which accepted meanings are often only the

attempts of others in the past to approximate an assumed meaning, and (ii) that the rich diversity, vibrancy, and flexibility of the English language has, in my view, been much underused, and an underuse that has sometimes led to bland interpretations of texts.

[4] Society is understood here, as elsewhere in my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, as a collection of individuals who live in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws (or customs) - whether written or aural - and the same institutions of authority, however that authority has been obtained and is manifest.

Jurisprudence is understood here as describing a systematic (often codified) system of law - written or aural, and whether practical, implemented, or theorized - and the scope, nature, and intent of those laws. The *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius and the Code of Justinian are thus examples of jurisprudence.

[5] Surah 3, Ayah 110.

[6] One of the five principle maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (which five principles are regarded as expressing the essence of *fiqh*) is *لعادة محكمة*. That is, that the customs of a society or culture are important and a factor to be considered if they do not conflict with the guidance of Quran and Sunnah.

[7] Matthew 22:21. Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and to God, the things that are God's.

[8] The importance of Muslim Adab - the manners, the morals, the culture, of Muslims - in defining and understanding Islam is something that many non-Muslims, especially those critical of Islam, are either ignorant of or dismiss.

An appreciation of Adab can be gleaned from reading Bukhari's book *Al-Adab Al-Mufrad* and also An-Nawawi's collection *Forty Ahadith*.

[9] qv. Part Three.

[10] Important parts of this jurisprudence concern international law and laws relating to human rights.

[11] *Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* (2012)

[12] qv. *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.



## **Part Three**

### **Religion, Law, and The Reformation of Individuals**

The overview in parts one and two of how, in my view, good and evil are understood in the culture of pathei-mathos and by early Christianity and Islam presented several musings, based as that overview was and those musing are on my experiences, study, and reflexion, over some forty years. One of my musings was that, in the case of Islam and Christianity - two of the most influential spiritual ways of life in the last two millennia - the understanding of good and evil was not originally of some dogmatical and theological abstraction divorced from human life, but a more directly personal one related to the behaviour of individuals, with the promise that good behaviour - as outlined in the gospels and in the Quran and Sunnah - would most probably be rewarded with a place in Heaven or Paradise, and that the powerful and the leaders of governments are accountable to God [1].

In the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad. For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political [2], or codified ideologically [3] or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years.

Thus it is that this culture contains the judgement, the insights, and the experience, of people as diverse in their origins, their life, and in some of their views, as Lao Tzu, Sappho, van Gogh, Solzhenitsyn, and Mohandas K. Gandhi. Sappho, for instance, moved by personal love, wrote over two and half thousand years ago that:

For some - it is horsemen; for others - it is infantry;  
For some others - it is ships which are, on this black earth,

Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,  
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood  
For Helen - she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty -  
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy  
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter  
Because [ the goddess ] led her away [...]

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:  
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement  
And the radiant splendour of her face  
Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour... [4]

While Gandhi, motivated by a desire for communal change and a vision of the future, more recently wrote that civilization, correctly understood, does not mean and does not require cities and centralized government and vast industries - and thus a modern State - but rather means and requires a certain personal moral conduct, a "mastery over our mind and our passions" [5], non-violence, the simplicity of village life [6], and communities voluntarily cooperating together in pursuit of collective, and personal, development.

Which two examples illustrate what are, perhaps, the two main answers that the culture of pathei-mathos offers and has so far offered to the question, posed in the Introduction of this essay, of what, if anything, can or perhaps should (i) replace the answers of religions for those who do not or cannot accept such religious answers and the theological perspective and guidance so offered, and/or (ii) replace the answers offered by the jurisprudence of nation-States and the political theories of governance of such States for those who adjudge that the suffering such States cause is, on balance, unacceptable [7]. These two answers - founded on or inspired by the insight of a personal rather than an impersonal, dogmatical, good and bad - are the internal one of a personal life, focused on personal love (and/or on Art, music, and so on), and the external one of seeking change by means such as the non-violence of passive resistance [8] and through personal example.

How to choose? What criteria, moral or otherwise, to use to judge these two answers, and the other answers that over millennia and by pathei-mathos, have been lived and/or proposed? The criterion of the reformation - the development, the change - of the individual? If so, a change from what to where? Or, perhaps, the criterion should be personal honour? Indeed, should there be, or can there even be, some suprapersonal judgemental criteria that others may employ?

Given the nature of pathei-mathos [9], and the nature of a criterion, I incline toward the view that there is no criteria beyond the very individual, the reasoned, the personal, non-transferable, and fallible, judgement which derives

from our own pathei-mathos, our own empathy, our own experience, our own life, and our own understanding of the causes of suffering.

### **Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress**

To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and 'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathei-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical [10], seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris. But how, if we choose the way of harmony, are we to live? Are we to try and judge the lives and works of those who in the past have so chosen, or seem to us to have so chosen, or whose life and works seems to manifest a certain harmony or a particular numinous understanding which resonates with us? Are we then to try and judge and compare the passive resistance of Gandhi to the life and works of William Penn to the poetry of Sappho to the life and work of van Gogh to the influence of Lao Tzu or Jesus of Nazareth. Who are we to do this, and why? Does non-violent activism toward and in the name of 'progress', and/or a message of spiritual reformation and redemption, have - or should have - a higher value than poetry or Art or music or a life lovingly devoted to a partner or to cultivating Wu-Wei?

Or do we see the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things, and our own human limitations, and accept that we do not need to so judge and so choose because we incline toward the view that all we can hope to do without veering toward hubris - toward upsetting the natural balance of Life, and thus causing more suffering - is to gently and with humility to try and personally

alleviate some suffering somewhere in our own small way by, for instance, being compassionate and honourable in the immediacy of the living moment? With thus little or no concern for, or presumptions about, what others believe constitutes some-thing termed progress, and with little or no concern either about the promise, the reward, of an afterlife or about some suprapersonal human manufactured form, such as a State, that in some shape or other exists during our own brief mortal life? If so, then what - if anything - is the meaning, the purpose, of our so brief human living?

## Notes

[1] "For what can a Man give in Exchange for his Life, as well as Soul? And though the chiefest in Government are seldom personally exposed, yet it is a Duty incumbent upon them to be tender of the Lives of their People; since without all Doubt, they are accountable to God for the Blood that is spilt in their Service. So that besides the Loss of so many Lives, of importance to any Government, both for Labour and Propagation, the Cries of so many Widows, Parents and Fatherless are prevented, that cannot be very pleasant in the Ears of any Government, and is the Natural Consequence of War in all Government." William Penn. *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe*. 1693 CE

[2] By the term politics is meant: (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory; (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society, either in accordance with a particular ideology or not.

[3] By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

[4] From fragment 16 (7th century BCE), the full text of which, from P. Oxy. 1231 and 2166, is, with square brackets indicating conjectures and missing text:

οἱ μὲν ἱππῶν στρότον οἱ δὲ πέσδων,  
οἱ δὲ νᾶων φαῖσ' ἐπ[ὶ] γᾶν μέλαι[ν]αν  
ἔ]μμεναι κάλλιστον, ἔγω δὲ κῆν' ὅτ-  
τω τις ἔραται·  
πά]λγχυ δ' εὖμαρες σύνετον πόησαι

πάντι τ[ο]ῦτ', ἃ γὰρ πόλυ περσκέθοισα  
 κάλλος [ἀνθ]ρώπων Ἑλένα [τὸ]ν ἄνδρα  
 τὸν [ ἄρ]ιστον  
 καλλ[ίποι]σ' ἔβα 'ς Τροίαν πλέοι[σα  
 κωῦδ[ἐ πα]ῖδος οὐδὲ φίλων το[κ]ήων  
 πά[μπαν] ἐμνάσθη, ἀλλὰ παράγαγ' αὐταν  
 [ ]σαν  
 [  
 [ ]αμπτον γὰρ [  
 [  
 [ ]...κούφως τ[ ]οη.[.]ν  
 [  
 ..]με νῦν Ἀνακτορί[ας ὁ]νέμναι-  
 σ' οὐ [ ]παρεοίσας,  
 τᾷς <κ>ε βολλοίμαν ἔρατόν τε βᾶμα  
 κάμαρυχμα λάμπρον ἴδην προσώπω  
 ἦ τὰ Λύδων ἄρματα κᾶν ὄπλοισι  
 [πεσδομ]άχεντας.

[5] *Hind Swaraj*, part 13. 1909 CE

[6] Letter to Jawaharlal Nehru, October 5, 1945 CE

[7] The argument here is along the following lines. That nation-States accept both the primacy of a codified law based on the maintenance of internal order according to that law, and the need to ensure the security, the interests, and the preservation, of the nation-State, both of which often necessitate or have necessitated the following: (i) the killing of and/or the use of violence against human beings in their own lands, and/or elsewhere by means of war or otherwise; (ii) the imprisonment/persecution of human beings both for deeds/dissent deemed illegal and for 'crimes against the State'; (iii) actions which cause pain and suffering and hardship to others, such as internal economic policies and/or external economic/trade sanctions; (iv) the commercial exploitation of the resources of this planet and of the other life with which we share this planet.

[8] "Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering, it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul-force [...] Passive resistance, that is, soul-force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms." Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, part 17. 1909 CE

Concerning governments, he wrote, also in *Hind Swaraj*, that: "They do not say: 'You must do such and such a thing,' but they say: 'if you do not do it, we will punish you'."

[9] qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

[10] As William Penn wrote in his tract *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Once More Briefly Debated and Defended*, published in 1670 CE:

"They overturn the Christian Religion: 1. In the Nature of it, which is Meekness; 2. In the Practice of it, which is Suffering."

## **Part Four**

### **Ontology and Denotatum**

To find answers to questions such as (i) how to live in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering, and (ii) is there a meaning to our existence beyond the answers of God and 'the pursuit of liberty and happiness' requires reformulating the questions based on the ontological presumptions that underlie them. That is, we need to understand ourselves, our nature, and to pose and answer questions regarding being, beings, and the relationship between beings.

Conventional religions - such as Christianity and Islam - begin with a supreme being and a revelation, the promise, of an afterlife following a judgement, by the supreme being, of we humans as individuals. That is, there is guidance given as to what is good and bad and as to one's expected behaviour, as well as individuals who can commit transgressions - who can 'sin' - or who, by following the correct guidance, can progress toward salvation. The ontology here is of a transcendent, immortal, God, or Allah, and of separate mortal beings who possess the potential - for example, an immortal soul - to gain an existence beyond the death of their corporeal body. The immortal being has the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the mortal beings, and is stated to be a real being with an existence independent of us.

In respect of The State, the ontology is one of an entity - The State, the nation-State, the government - and of individuals ('citizens') who are less powerful than this entity, with this entity, however named, having the ability (the power) to punish, or to reward, the citizens. There is guidance given, by powerful entity, in the form of laws - of what is bad and good and one's expected behaviour - and the promise of such things as 'Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness' and reward of, a possible progress toward (in this life), security, health, and (possibly) wealth or at least a reasonable standard of living. Here, the powerful entity is a human ideation, of varied and variable specification, and which specifications have been manufactured - brought into being - by humans at various times during the past three hundred years and more.

In respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings [1], an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή [2]. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere [3] love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet.

In effect, this is the ontology of the illusion of self and of the unity, sans denotatum, of all living beings; of how we - presenced as human beings - can and do affect, and have affected, other life including other humans, often in ways we are not aware of; and of how our perception of I and of 'them' (the separation-of-otherness) has often led to us affecting other life in a harmful way, thus causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, for that other life and often for ourselves. The ontology where there is no distinction, in being, between us - the emanations - and what emanates; there is only the appearance of difference due to our use of a causal-only perception and of denotatum. That is, we are ψυχή as ψυχή is both within us and us. We are the flux, the changing, of Life; changing as it changes.

There is therefore no suprapersonal supreme being who punishes and rewards; no requirement to actively agitate for or against the State; no afterlife separate from us because what exists after us is, partly, us transformed in being and, partly, what we aid or harm by virtue of the fact that we are an affective and effective connexion - a part of - Life. Furthermore, there is no need to strive to progress toward a some-thing because we already are that some-thing; that is, we already are what we are meant to be, except we often - or mostly - do not know this, or do not know what we are doing charmed as we seem to be by the

charisma of words, by denotatum. As Heraclitus expressed it:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ  
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ  
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ  
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγέσμαι κατὰ φύσιν  
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους  
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες  
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

### **The Simple Way of Harmony**

This alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei [5].

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence [6] and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment [7].

There is, in this alternative, no guidance required; and no-thing - such as an afterlife, or enlightenment, or liberty or happiness - to be attained. No need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living - sans denotatum - that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for humility.



## Notes

[1] An affective connexion is an operative one, which therefore can affect or influence what it is connected to, and specifically in a non-causal and thus synchronistic manner; that is, without necessarily having a prior cause. An effective connexion is one of an effect; that is, is the result of some-thing else or causes some-thing else as result of that or some other prior cause.

[2] Life *qua* being. qv. my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[3] qv. *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, and *Conspectus of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. (2012)

[4] Myatt. *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*. (2013)

[5] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In respect of non-interference and hubriatic striving, refer to my 2012 essay, *Some Personal Musings On Empathy - In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος*

[6] As mentioned in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us and beyond the purvue of our empathy, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, thing to do.

[7] In respect of such valourous intervention in personal situations, the following quotation is from my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*.

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others [...]

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us. Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

## **Part Five**

### **A Very Personal Conclusion**

Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such

early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair.

For they - as so many - having harmed no one, died, while I - as so many - lived on to continue causing mayhem, chaos, suffering, and grief, no God it seemed to stay us or to slay us for our miscreant mischief. That, to me, seems to be no deity of empathy and compassion; only one explanation to maybe betake our grief, our tears, our fears, away.

I admit I could be wrong, but - having perhaps at least in some ways, and partially, understood the errors of both my selfish and my extremist suffering-causing pasts - I still cannot accept that such a compassionate, empathic, deity would, could, sanction such a taking of such innocence and allow such infliction of suffering to continue. For that makes no sense to me, given how I now do not believe there is another life awaiting us where we, *judicium divinum*, are rewarded or condemned. I find no comfort there; no satisfying explanation for the suffering that afflicts so many now as in the past: as if that, such suffering, as was written once, many times, is some sort of *casus belli* for our life, to be endured until such time as such a deity deems fit to end it.

Man, that is born of a woman, hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery. He cometh up, and is cut down, like a flower; he fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. In the midst of life we are in death. Of whom may we seek for succour, but of thee, O Lord...

Must we therefore be resigned to suffering, to misery, to injustices, to the iniquity, to the continuing iniquity, of selfish, hubriatic, individuals who bully, rape, scheme, subjugate, manipulate, injure, maim, and kill? Reassured by *judicium divinum* or - perhaps - hoping, trusting, in the pending justice of some judge, some government, or some State?

Is it wrong for me to still feel the need for someone, some many, somewhere, to somehow in some way forestall, prevent, such deeds by such persons as may unjustly harm some others so that there is no waiting for the divine justice of a deity; no waiting for some Court somewhere to - possibly, and sometimes - requite a grievous wrong. No waiting for that promised idealistic idyllic future society when we humans - having somehow (perhaps miraculously) been changed in nature *en masse* - have ceased to so grievously, harmfully, selfishly, inflict ourselves on others.

My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of *δίκη*, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain - prevent - others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness - as lived,

presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope - even need - of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἀρμονίη we, in such honourable moments, are.

---

### **III Blue Reflected Starlight**

As it departed toward the vastness of interstellar space, the Voyager 1 interplanetary spacecraft in 1990<sub>(ce)</sub> transmitted an image of Earth from a distance of over four billion miles; the most distant image of Earth we human beings have ever seen. The Earth, our home, was a bluish dot; a mere Cosmic speck among the indefinity, visible only because of reflected starlight and - in the solar panorama imaged by Voyager on that February day - of no observed importance. One speck in one galaxy in a vast Cosmos of billions upon billions of galaxies, and one speck that would most probably appear, to a non-terran, less interesting than the rings of Saturn, just visible from such a distance.

Yet we human beings, en masse, continue to live in a manner which not only belies our Cosmic insignificance but which militates against the empathy, the humility, that such a Cosmic perspective can and does engender. Thus do we individually, as well as collectively, have pride in our lives, our deeds, our 'accomplishments', just as we continue to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself: and exploit for pleasure, or profit, or from some desire or because of some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation we believe in or support. Either believing or asserting, in our hubris, that we 'know' - that we 'understand' - what we are doing, or reckless of consequences because unable or unwilling to control our desires; unable or unwilling to control ourselves or our addiction to some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation.

Thus does the suffering we here inflict on other life - human and otherwise - continue. Thus does our human-wrought destruction continue, as if we are in thrall consciously or otherwise to the ideation that our planet, and its life including other humans, are some kind of 'resource', a means to supply our needs or a way to satiate our desires. So easy, so very easy, to injure, hate, and kill. So easy, so very easy, to satiate the desire to be in control. So very easy to place ourselves first; even easier to have our feelings, our desires, subsume, overcome, whatever consideration we might give, or previously had given, to others and to other life. So easy, so very easy, to make excuses - consciously or otherwise - to ourselves, and to others, for what we have done or what we are about to do; for always there is the excuse of self-interest or self-preservation, or the excuse of desires or some cause or some faith or some ideology or some ideation. So easy, so very easy, to spew forth words.

It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the pathei-mathos of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal pathei-mathos - whose

personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the indefinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history.

As I know from my outré experience of life - especially my forty years of extremism, hubris, and selfishness; my terms of imprisonment, my experience with gangs, with people of bad intentions and with those of good intentions - it really is as if we terran men have, en masse, learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years. For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, those wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical *φύσις* of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculous with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to?

Are we, we men here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves, and are given, no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for our thousand year upon thousand year of violence against women? Are we capable of such a reformation of our kind that such reprehensible violence against women by cowardly men becomes only historical fact?

Are we, here on this planet, capable of restraining and reforming ourselves, en masse, such that we allow ourselves no excuses of whatever kind from whatever source for wars, armed conflicts, brutality against perceived or stated 'enemies', and murderous intervention? Such a reformation of ourselves that wars, armed conflicts, such brutality, and such interventions, become only historical fact?

Or are we fated, under Sun, to squabble and bicker and hate and kill and destroy and exploit this planet and its life until we, a failed species, leave only dead detritic traces of our hubris?

Or will we, or some of us, betake ourselves away to colonize faraway non-terran places, taking with us our unreformed paradoxical *φύσις* to perchance again despoil, destroy, as some of our kind once betook themselves away to forever change parts of this speck of blue reflected starlight which gave us this fortunity of Life?

Yet again I admit I have no answers.

DWM  
2012

ooo

#### **IV**

### **Fifty Years Of Diverse Peregrinations**

In fifty years of diverse peregrinations - which included forty years of practical involvement with various religions and spiritual ways, practical involvement with extremisms both political and religious, and some seven years of intense interior reflexion occasioned by a personal tragedy - I have come to appreciate and to admire what the various religions and the diverse spiritual ways have given to us over some three thousand years.

Thus have I sensed that our world is, and has been, a better place because of them and that we, as a sentient species, are en masse better because of them. Thus it is that I personally - even though I have developed my own non-religious weltanschauung - have a great respect for religions such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism; for spiritual ways such as Buddhism, Taoism; for older paganisms such as (i) θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες, and (ii) άγνωστος θεός [1], and for the slowly evolving more recent paganisms evident for instance in a spiritual concern for the welfare of our planet and for

the suffering we have for so long inflicted on other humans and on the other life with which we share this planet.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, I disagree with those who, often intemperate in words or deeds - or both - disrespectfully fail to appreciate such religions and spiritual ways and the treasure, the culture, the *pathei-mathos*, that they offer, concentrating as such intemperate people so often do on what they perceive to be or feel to be are the flaws, the mistakes, of such religions and such spiritual ways while so often ignoring (as such people tend to do) their own personal flaws, their own mistakes, as well as the reality that it is we humans beings - with our *ὑβρις*, with our lack of humility, our lack of appreciation for the numinous, and with our intolerance and our often arrogant and harsh interpretations of such religions - who have been the cause and who continue to be the cause of such suffering as has blighted and as still blights this world.

As Heraclitus mentioned over two thousand years ago:

ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν [2]

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

As recounted of Jesus of Nazareth over two thousand years ago:

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυσεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτήν βαλέτω λίθον. [3]

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [ *Αναμαρτητος* ] throw the first stone at her.

One of the greatest gifts such religions and spiritual ways offer seems to me to be the gift of humility: the insight that we human beings are fallible and transient, and that there is some-thing 'out there' which is numinous, sacred, more vast and more powerful than us whether we call this some-thing God, or Allah, or *θεοί* or Nature, or *δίκη* or Wyrð, or Karma or *ψυχή* or simply the acausal. The insight that to disregard this some-thing, to disrespect what-is numinous, is unwise - *ὑβρις* - and perpetuates suffering or is the genesis of new suffering and which new suffering may well continue long after we, who brought it into being and who gave it life, are dead.

This insight of humility is evident, for instance and for me, in the sacred music of the Christian church; from the simplicity - the numinous purity - of plainchant to the polyphony of Byrd, Palestrina, and Vittoria to the counterpoint of JS Bach. For I find in this music an expression both of *κάλος* and of the numinous *mysterium* that is at the heart of Christianity, manifest as this *mysterium* is, for Christianity, in the allegory of the life, the betrayal, the crucifixion, of Jesus of



Nazareth and by a belief in redemption through both love and suffering. And this is essentially the same, albeit unallegorical and often wordless, numinous mysterium which we personally feel or we know or are touched by through that sadness born of our own pathos; by our acknowledgement of our mistakes, by our personal experience of suffering and grief, and by our heartfelt longing for, our hope for, the beautiful, for the redemption of innocence, for peace and love, manifest for example not only in the Christian allegory of Heaven, in the Muslim Jannah, in the Jewish Shamayim, but also in a very personal often private longing and hope for a better world and which longing and hope we so tearfully know is so often broken or forgotten or thrust aside by both our egoistical self and by other human beings: because of their, because of our, weakness, our failure to be the person we feel or we know we might be or perhaps could have been, born as such knowing and such feelings so often are in the inner intimacy that follows a personal grief or being a witness to or an accomplice in some act or acts of harshness and suffering.

This inner intimacy with the stark reality of our own being and with the world of suffering is what has caused so many people over thousands of years to try and not only reform themselves but also to try, in whatever way, to alleviate or try to alleviate some of the suffering of others, an effort and a reform so often aided by religion [4] and thus a tribute to those positive qualities, those personal virtues, which religions have so often revealed or reminded us of. Which is why - as I mentioned recently to another correspondent [5] - I incline toward the view that on balance the good that religions such as Christianity have done over millennia outweighs the suffering that has been caused by those who adhered to or who believed in some harsh interpretation of that religion.

There has thus developed within me these past seven years an understanding of my past hubris, my past multitudinous mistakes, and of how a lack of humility on my part - my extremism, my certainty of knowing about myself, my certainty of knowing about some cause or ideology or harsh interpretation of some religion I accepted and adhered to - was probably one of the most significant factors in that hubris and those suffering-causing mistakes. Which personal understanding, together with a decades-long experience of others such as I, led me to hypothesize that one of the fundamental causes of extremism is a masculine certainty of knowing and that, therefore, religions and spiritual ways are and can be - when not interpreted in a harsh, hubristic, way but rather via that personal humility and that appreciation of the numinous I believe are intrinsic to them - affective and effective answers to such extremism and to the harm that extremists cause.

In essence, therefore, my philosophy of pathos - my much revised 'numinous way' - is my own spiritual answer, born of fifty years of diverse peregrinations; my personal answer and response to the certitude of knowing, the harshness, that all extremisms (political, religious, and social) manifest, as well as also - perhaps, hopefully - being (as a spiritual way) in some small manner, and now sans a personal belief in *judicium divinum*, some expiation for

all the suffering that I over decades caused or contributed to.

The numinous, the beautiful - the divine - remain, to remind us. As someone so beautifully expressed it:

Wer, wenn ich schrie, hörte mich denn aus der Engel  
Ordnungen? und gesetzt selbst, es nähme  
einer mich plötzlich ans Herz: ich verginge von seinem  
stärkeren Dasein. Denn das Schöne ist nichts  
als des Schrecklichen Anfang, den wir noch grade ertragen,  
und wir bewundern es so, weil es gelassen verschmäht,  
uns zu zerstören. Ein jeder Engel ist schrecklich. [6]

DWM  
2012

### Notes

[1] qv. Pausanias. Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις 1.1.4 -

ἐνταῦθα καὶ Σκιράδος Ἀθηνᾶς ναός ἐστι καὶ Διὸς ἀπωτέρω, βωμοὶ δὲ  
θεῶν τε ὀνομαζομένων Ἀγνώστων καὶ ἡρώων καὶ παίδων τῶν Θησέως  
καὶ Φαληροῦ

Also here is a shrine [ ναός ] to Athena Skirados and, further afield,  
one to Zeus, and others to [the] un-named unknown gods, to the  
heroes, as well as to those children of Theseus and Phalerus

[2] Fragment 43

[3] John, 8.7

[4] For example, I well remember, decades ago, in the first month or so of my training to be a nurse doing some research into the history of nursing as preparation for my turn in giving a talk and presentation to our class as part of our nursing course; and finding just how entwined religion and the origins of organized nursing were, from the fourth century (CE) Roman lady Fabiola to the monastic infirmaries of medieval Europe to the al-Nuri al-Kabir bimaristan in Damascus [qv. Ahmad Isa: *Tarikh al-Bimaristanat fi al-Islam* [History of Hospitals in Islam]. Damascus, 1939] to the Hospitallers of St John to Florence Nightingale and beyond.

I also remember the hundreds of people met over some forty years whose faith inspired or aided them to endeavour, in social or political or legal or personal

ways, to alleviate some of the suffering of others, and who each, in their own way - and whether Christian, Muslim, Jew, Hindu, or Buddhist - helped make a positive difference.

[5] qv. *Just My Fallible Views, Again - Replies to Some Enquiries*. 2012

[6] Rilke, *Die erste Duineser Elegie*

Who, were I to sigh aloud, of those angelic beings might hear me?  
And even if one of them deigned to take me to his heart I would dissolve  
Into his very existence.  
For beauty is nothing if not the genesis of that numen  
Which we can only just survive  
And which we so admire because it can so calmly disdain to betake us.  
Every angel is numinous

---

## **Appendix**

### **Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations**

#### **Abstraction**

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

#### **Acausal**

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of *ψυχή*.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and *πάθει μάθος* and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

### **ἀρετή**

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

### **Aristotelian Essentials**

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of *pathei-mathos* adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

### **ἁρμονία**

*ἁρμονία* (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating *wu-wei* and *σωφρονεῖν* (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

### **Compassion**

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means *benignity*, which word derives from the Latin *benignitatem*, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ ii. 483 ] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin *passiō*. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

## Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us - or can incline us - toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

## δαίμων

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

## Descriptor

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

## δίκη

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκη of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκη - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκη from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

## **Empathy**

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin *sympathia*, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning *enduring/suffering*, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

## **Enantiodromia**

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

## ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἧ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

## Extremism

By *extreme* is meant *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence *extremism* is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

## εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142



## Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin *honorem* (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) *onor/onur*. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise  
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,  
So that Achilles underfongeth  
As to a yong ladi belongeth  
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. *History of the Life of Henry the Second*. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of *ψυχή* - of Life, of our *φύσις* - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by *σωφρονεῖν* and in accord with *δίκη*. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of *ὑβρις*, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, *ἀρμονίη*.

## Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from *πάθει μάθος*.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (*ὑβρις*) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of *ἀρμονίη*, of *δίκη*, of *σωφρονεῖν* - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that *ἔρις* and *πόλεμος*, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

## **Ideation**

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

## **Immediacy-of-the-Moment**

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and *εὐταξία* - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

## **Innocence**

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and *πάθει μάθος* incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

## **Masculous**

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a

certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculine nature.

Masculine is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculine Schibboleth." *True Happiness, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinburgh, 1633

## **Muliebral**

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

## **Numinous**

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of *ψυχή*; a balance which *ὑβρις* upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to *ψυχή*, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of *ψυχή*.

## **Pathei-Mathos**

The Greek term *πάθει μάθος* derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning *learning from adversary*, or *wisdom arises from (personal) suffering*; or *personal experience is the genesis of true learning*.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

## **Politics**

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific

geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

## **Πόλεμος**

*Πόλεμος* - Heraclitus fragment 80 - is not some abstract 'war' or strife or *kampf*, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as *δίκη* but also accompanies *ἔρις* because it is the nature of *Πόλεμος* that beings, born because of and by *ἔρις*, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by *enantiodromia*.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, *ἔρις* was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) and a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the *δαίμων* (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's *πόλις* (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

## **Physis (φύσις)**

*φύσις* suggests either (i) the Homeric usage of nature or character of a person, as for example in *Odyssey*, Book 10, vv. 302-3, and also in Herodotus (2.5.2):

*Αἰγύπτου γὰρ φύσις ἐστὶ τῆς χώρας τοιήδε*

or (ii) *Φύσις* (Physis) as in Heraclitus fragment 123 - that is, the natural nature of all beings, beyond their outer appearance, and which natural nature we, as human beings, have a natural [an unconscious] inclination to conceal; either because of *ὑβρις* or through an ignorance, an unknowing, of ourselves as an emanation of *ψυχή*.

In terms of the nature or the character of an individual:

*σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας*

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Heraclitus fragment 112

## **Religion**

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

### **Separation-of-Otherness**

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our *self* and *the others*. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value /difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from *ἀρμονία, δίκη*, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and *pathei-mathos* can reveal.

### **Society**

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

### **State**

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

## The Good

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

## Time

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the *φύσις* - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of *ψυχή*, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

## ὕβρις

*ὕβρις* (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement - *σωφρονεῖν* - and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and *πάθει μάθος*.

Hubris upsets the natural balance - is contrary to *ἀρμονίη* [harmony] - and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, *ὕβρις* disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as *ψυχή* and *θεοί* and *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* and *δαιμόνων* and those sacred places guarded or watched over by *δαιμόνων*.

## Way

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to

locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

## **Wisdom**

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, *σωφρονεῖν*, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: *rerum divinarum et humanarum*. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between *ὑβρις* and *ἀρετή*; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of *ἀρμονίη*.

## **Wu-wei**

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their *φύσις*, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, *πάθει μάθος*, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the *physis*) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

## **ψυχή**

Life *qua* being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of *ψυχή*. Thus *ψυχή* is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, *φύσις*, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between *σωφρονεῖν* (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and *ὑβρις*.

---

**cc David Wulstan Myatt 2013**  
(Second Edition)

This work is issued under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt

---



## Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos

In my recent (2023) essay *A Sacramental Link?* I mentioned that my interpretation of the Gospel of John inclined me suggest that Johannine Christianity was "the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations." [1]

My interpenetration of that text is however just one of thousands over centuries with many of those other interpretations, of that and the other Gospels and the Scriptures in general, causing schisms, conflicts, and accusations of heresy as in the case of the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεός and the denotatum ὁ θεός in, for instance the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical.

Which returns us to the problems of exegesis and denotata, and the axioms of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos which are:

- (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself;
- (ii) that it is denotata - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being;
- (iii) that denotata and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and
- (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share our planet.

What is important about empathy and pathei-mathos is that they are directly personal perceiverations and experiences, and therefore have what I termed a 'personal horizon' meaning that they

"cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." [2]

The knowing so revealed is only and always our personal fallible answer or answers, and which knowing is invariably a wordless empathic knowing that cannot be adequately expressed by words and terms (by denotata) without in some manner distorting it because words and terms depend on exegesis, which exegesis can and often does vary from century to century.

In practical terms this knowing implies a certain humility since empathy and pathei-mathos inform us that we are fallible beings, arising as this personal knowledge does from the intimations of the numinous that empathy and pathei-mathos almost invariably provide: of our connexion to other beings, human and otherwise; of our minute place in the Cosmos as one mortal, short-lived, being on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of Galaxies; and of the suffering of so many human beings, century after century, often caused by wars and conflicts often based on some certitude of belief in some cause, or on some passion, or on some interpretation of some religion, or some ideology or notion or 'destiny' with such wars and conflicts generationally replaced by others based on other certitudes of belief or on the same old passions.

A forgetting of this humility, will-fully or otherwise, has however frequently occurred and still occurs with the individual seeking to make their pathei-mathos the basis for some -ism or -ology or more often some interpretation of some existing -ism or -ology. However, a remembering of such humility can often lead to the life of the reclusive mystic or to a life of compassionately seeking to alleviate in some non-confrontational and practical way at least some of the suffering of other life, human and otherwise.

As I noted in *Soli Deo Gloria*,

"all the diverse manifestations of the Numen, all the diverse answers, of the various numinous Ways and religions, have or may have their place, and all perhaps may serve the same ultimate purpose - that of bringing us closer to the ineffable beauty, the ineffable goodness, of life; that of transforming us, reminding us; that of giving us as individuals the chance to cease to cause suffering, to presence the good, to be part of the Numen itself. For what distinguishes a valuable, a good, a numinous Way or religion, is firstly this commitment, however expressed, to the cessation of suffering through means which do not cause more suffering; secondly, having some practical means whereby individuals can transform themselves for the better, and thirdly, possessing some way of presenting, manifesting, presencing what is sacred, what is numinous, thus reconnecting the individual to the source of their being, to their humanity.

In my fallible view, any Way or religion which manifests, which expresses, which guides individuals toward, the numinous humility we human beings need is good, and should not be stridently condemned. For such personal humility - that which prevents us from committing hubris, whatever the raison d'être, the theology, the philosophy - is a presencing of the numinous. Indeed, one might write and say that it is a personal humility - whatever the source - that expresses our true developed (that is, rational and empathic) human nature and which nature such Ways or religions or mythological allegories remind us of. Hence the formulae, the expression, *Soli Deo Gloria* being one Western cultural manifestation of a necessary truth, manifesting as it does one particular numinous allegory among many such historical and cultural and mythological

allegories. Just as, for example, the sight of King Louis IX walking barefoot to Sainte Chapelle was a symbol of the humility which the Christian faith, correctly understood, sought to cultivate in individuals. " [3]

#### A Personal View

While I appreciate how various Ways of living and codified religions can presence and often have presented the numinous and thus have been and are for many a conduit toward a personal humility and compassion, my personal perceiviation has been for over a decade and remains my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, which is just some recollections of my experiences and contemplations regarding the loss of loved ones, of working and living on farms in England, and of solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of rural English Shires.

Given the 'personal horizon' of these recollections and contemplations they cannot not, without removing from them their essence of a personal wordless experiencing of the numinous, form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a philosophy or a Way to guide others, just as the recollections and contemplations of others ancient and modern, and the authors themselves, should not be or become or be seen as a guide or even as a meritorious example.

As it says in Ayat 63 of Surah 25 of the Quran:

وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ  
الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا

"The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are those who walk on earth in humility and, when the arrogant speak to them, they reply Salaam." [4]

As the poetess Sappho wrote:

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἄβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καί μοι  
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίῳ καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε [5]

I love delicate softness:  
For me, love has brought the brightness  
And the beauty of the Sun

As it says in the Beatitudes:

Μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.  
μακάριοι οἱ πενθοῦντες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ παρακληθήσονται.  
μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν.  
μακάριοι οἱ πεινῶντες καὶ διψῶντες τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ὅτι αὐτοὶ χορτασθήσονται.  
μακάριοι οἱ ἐλεήμονες, ὅτι αὐτοὶ ἐλεηθήσονται.  
μακάριοι οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ, ὅτι αὐτοὶ τὸν θεὸν ὄψονται.  
μακάριοι οἱ εἰρηνοποιοί, ὅτι αὐτοὶ υἱοὶ θεοῦ κληθήσονται.  
μακάριοι οἱ δεδιωγμένοι ἕνεκεν δικαιοσύνης, ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.

Fortunate, those humble with spiritus, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean.  
Fortunate, those who grieve, for they shall have solace.  
Fortunate, the gentle, for they shall acquire the Earth.  
Fortunate, those who hunger and thirst for fairness, for they shall be replete.  
Fortunate, the compassionate, for they shall receive compassion.  
Fortunate, the refined of heart, for they shall perceive Theos.  
Fortunate, the peaceable, for they shall be called children of Theos.  
Fortunate, those harassed due to their fairness, for theirs is the Kingdom of Empyrean. [6]

Which interpretations of mine illustrate the problems of exegesis, and why my preference, now and for over a decade, is and has been for the wordless perceivations of empathy and of a personal pathei-mathos.

David Myatt  
October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

[1] The essay is included in [www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf](http://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf)

[2] *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022. [www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf](http://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf)

[3] *Soli Deo Gloria*, 2011. Included in [www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf](http://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf)

[4] Ar-Rahmaan is one of the names of Allah, signifying The Most Merciful. The 'Ibaad of Ar-Rahmaan are the Believers who follow the Word of Allah in the Quran and as manifest in the example of the Prophet Muhammad.

[5] P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

[6] The Gospel According To Matthew 5: 3-10. My translation and commentary of The Beatitudes is included in [www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf](http://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-compilation-religion.pdf)

Since I have used unusual words - for example, the spiritus instead of the conventional 'the spirit', and Empyrean instead of 'heaven' - I append here extracts from my commentary.

μακάριος. A difficult word to translate since "blessed" has acquired particular (sometimes moralistic) meanings as a result of nearly two thousand years of exegesis, while "happy" is rather prosaic. The context - as in ὅτι αὐτῶν ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν - suggests "fortunate" [...]

πτωχός. Usually translated as "poor" which however has too many exegetical and modern connotations, and does not express the metaphorical sense here which implies being "humble" in respect of τὸ πνεῦμα.

τῷ πνεύματι [...] τῶν οὐρανῶν. In respect of τὸ πνεῦμα as the spiritus (rather than as the Spirit) and οὐρανός as Empyrean (rather than Heaven), qv. my commentary on John 1:32 from which this an extract:

οὐρανός here is always translated as 'heaven' although the term 'heaven' - used in the context of the Gospels - now has rather different connotations than the Greek οὐρανός, with the word 'heaven' now often implying something explained by almost two thousand years of exegesis and as depicted, for example, in medieval and Renaissance Christian art. However, those hearing or reading this particular Greek gospel for the first time in the formative years of Christianity would most probably have assumed the usual Greek usage of "the heavens" in the sense of the "the star-filled firmament above" or in the sense of "the sky" or as the abode of theos and/or of the gods, ἐν οὐρανῷ θεοί [...]

It therefore seems apposite to suggest a more neutral word than 'heaven' as a translation of οὐρανός and one which might not only be understood in various 'classical' ways by an audience of Greek speakers (such as the ways described above) but also be open to a new, and Christian, interpretation consistent with the milieu that existed when the Gospel of John was written and first heard. That is, before the exegesis of later centuries and long before post-Roman Christian iconography. Hence my suggestion of the post-classical Latin term Empyrean, which can bear the interpretation of the abode of theos and/or of the gods, of "the sky", of the "the star-filled firmament above"; and a Christian one suggested by Genesis 2.8 - παράδεισον ἐν Ἐδεμ (the Paradise of Eden) - and also by shamayim.

## A Sacramental Link?



Would being connected again to the 'source of grace' through the Catholic sacrament of confession and Holy Communion provide expiation for past transgressions and be cathartic? Possibly, given that certain passages from the gospel of John have somewhat resonated with me since I began the task, in 2017, of translating that Gospel.

Among the passages were, in my translation, "aware as he [Jesus] was of the person within" (2:25) and "receive the Halig Spiritus [Holy Spirit]. If you release anyone from their errors, they are released; if you hold onto them, they are held onto," 20:22-23. [1] [2] With, according to my fallible understanding, the second quotation the genesis of one of the founding principles of the Roman Catholic Church: of an ordained Priest having the religious authority to give absolution for the errors [1] a person has committed, and the authority to specify what penance is required for expiation. There is thus a sacramental, a living, link to the message of Jesus.

Which reminds me of what you mentioned in previous correspondence about the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward a having a partner of the same gender. In my experience, the attitude at the Parish and monastic level is often more understanding and compassionate than some past or ancient announcement or some work emanating from the Vatican perhaps suggested and suggests.

Having endeavoured to translate the gospel of John what I found was, to quote what I wrote in the *Introduction* to my translation of chapters 1-5 of the Gospel of John, that

"it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Penn many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth."

Which is that it is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from past moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and hence on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'.

It seems that such an appreciation - perhaps more correctly, re-appreciation - of this is slowly permeating, at the Parish level and around most of the world, the Roman Catholic Church.

As for me, and in respect of Catholic sacraments, perhaps I am weakening as my last mortal days seem to near, just as the libertine and poet Earl Rochester confessed on his death-bed, and just as the character Lord Marchmain, portrayed by Laurence Olivier, symbolically did in his last moments in that wonderful 1981 adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited*.

David Myatt  
September 2023

A slightly revised extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

[1] I translated ἁμαρτία not by the conventional *sin* but rather as 'error' or 'mistake' for reasons I attempted to explain in my commentary and in various essays such as *Exegesis and Translation*. One of the reasons relates to how Julian of Norwich perceived the teaching of Jesus; another to the c. 880 AD translation of the c. 525 AD text *Consolatio Philosophiae*; another to something Thomas Aquinas wrote.

As explained in my *Exegesis and Translation*,

One of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral

attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous, the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided.

One of the oldest usages of the word sin - so far discovered - is in the c. 880 CE translation of the c. 525 CE text *Consolatio Philosophiae*, a translation attributed to King Ælfred. Here, the Old English spelling of syn is used:

ƿæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn ƿæt mon ƿæs wenan scyle be Gode

The context of the original Latin of Boethius [i] is *cogitare*, in relation to a dialogue about goodness and God, so that the sense of the Latin is that it is incorrect - an error, wrong - to postulate/claim/believe certain things about God. There is thus here, in Boethius, as in early English texts such as *Beowulf*, [ii] the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word syn implies: from the Latin sons, sontis.

Thus, this early usage of the English word syn seems to impart a sense somewhat different from what we now associate with the word sin, which is why in my translation of John, 8.7 [iii] I eschewed that much overused and pejorative word in order to try and convey something of the numinous original:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητος ] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

Jesus here is not, in my view, sermonizing about sin, as a puritan preacher might, and as if he is morally superior to and has judged the sinners. Instead, he is rather gently and as a human pointing out an obvious truth about our human nature; explaining, in v.11, that he has not judged her conduct:

ἡ δὲ εἶπεν· οὐδεὶς, κύριε. εἶπεν δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς· οὐδὲ ἐγὼ σε κατακρίνω· πορεύου, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε

[And] she answered, No one, my Lord. Whereupon Jesus replied "Neither do I judge [κατακρίνω] you, therefore go, and avoid errors such as those". [iv]

Such a translation avoids the rather contradictory nature of most other translations which have Jesus clearly stating that he also does not judge her but then have him go on to say that she should 'sin no more' with the obvious implication that he has indeed judged her in that in his judgement she had indeed sinned before.

Understood and appreciated thus, sans the now culturally-biased word sin, these passages from the gospel according to John - together with passages such as Luke 19.10 and Romans 13.10 [v] - perhaps usefully summarize the evangel of Jesus of Nazareth; the (in my view) rather human message of avoiding judging others because we ourselves are prone to error, the message of love, and the message of redemption (forgiveness) for those who in the past have made mistakes but who have thereafter tried to avoid making such mistakes again, those hitherto perhaps damaged or lost.

Footnotes:

[i] Quare quod a summo bono diversum est sui natura, id summum bonum non est; quod nefas est de eo cogitare, quo nihil constat esse praestantius. *Consolatio Philosophiae*, Liber Tertius, pr. x

[ii] *Beowulf*, 2470f, where the spelling synn is used:

eaferum laefde, swa deð eadig mon,  
lond ond leodbyrig, ƿa he of life gewat.  
ƿa wæs synn ond sacu Sweona ond Geata  
ofer wid wæter, wroht gemæne,  
herenið hearda, syððan Hreðel swealt

[ii] qv. Myatt, *Fifty Years of Diverse Peregrinations*. 2013

[iv] The conventional interpretation of ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν μηκέτι ἁμάρτανε is "from now on sin no more".

[v] (a} Luke 19.10:

ἦλθεν γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ζητῆσαι καὶ σῶσαι τὸ ἀπολωλός. "The arrivance [ἔρχομαι] of the Son of Man was to seek and to save what was lost.

However, a more interesting interpretation is:

The arrivance of the Son of Man was to seek and to repair [σώζω] what had been damaged [ἀπόλλυμι]

and which interpretation is suggested by (i) the sense of σώζω: keep safe, preserve, maintain -

whence repair, and (ii) the sense of ἀπόλλυμι: destroy, ruin, kill, demolish, and - metaphorically - damaged, lost, and die.

(b) Romans 13.10:

ἡ ἀγάπη τῷ πλησίον κακὸν οὐκ ἐργάζεται· πλήρωμα οὖν νόμου ἡ ἀγάπη

love brings no harm to the neighbour; love is the completion of the law

[2] As I noted in my commentary on John 1:33 regarding the Holy Spirit, which I translated as Halig Spiritus:

ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ. *in Halig Spiritus*. I have here used the Old English word Halig - as for example found in the version of John 17.11 in the Lindisfarne Gospel, 'Du halig fæder' - to translate ἅγιος rather than the later word 'holy' derived as that is from halig and used as it was by Wycliffe in his 1389 translation of this phrase, "in the Hooly Gost", which itself echoes the ASV, "on Halgum Gaste."

The unique phrase *in Halig Spiritus* - in place of the conventional 'with the Holy Spirit' - may thus express something of the numinosity, and the newness, of the original Gospel, especially as the word 'holy' has been much overused, imputes particular meanings from over a thousand years of exegesis, and, latterly in common parlance, has become somewhat trivialized. In respect of ἐν, while most translators have opted here (as in respect of 1.26 ff) for "with", I have opted for "in", given that John baptized "in water" - for example, in Aenon - and given that Jesus baptizes "in, with" (in the name of) Halig Spiritus.

---

#### Related:

##### **The Gospel According To John**

Chapter 1 - 5

Translation and Commentary

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2023/08/myatt-gospel-john-1-5.pdf>

##### **Exegesis And Translation**

<https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

---

Image credit:

Icon of Jesus Pantocrator, Δέησις Mosaic  
Hagia Sophia, c. 1260 CE

---

# The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

David Myatt

ooo

Seventh Edition 2022

## Contents

- Prefatory Note
- Introduction - Physis, Being, and The Numinous
- Conspectus
- The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium
- Some Personal Musings On Empathy
- Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual
- Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos
- The Change of Enantiodromia
- The Abstraction of Change
- Footnotes
- Appendix I - The Principle of Δίκαια
- Appendix II - From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous
- Appendix III - Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture
- Appendix IV - The Concept of Physis
- Appendix V - Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α
- Appendix VI - Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1
- Appendix VII - Glossary of Terms and Greek Words
- Appendix VIII - Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition
- Bibliography

---

## Prefatory Note

The numinous way - the philosophy - of pathei-mathos (πάθει μάθος) represents my weltanschauung, and which philosophy I advanced after I had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of the 'numinous way', and which 'numinous way' I developed between 2006 and 2011.

Included are my writings concerning this philosophy which were penned in 2012; a slightly revised version of a 2011 essay, *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, which has some relevance to that philosophy; and some appendices which elaborate on these earlier writings and on my use of words such as Δίκαια, σωφρονεῖν, and 'abstraction'.

*The Conspectus* summarizes the philosophy of pathei-mathos, and, as the title might suggest, in a few places paraphrases, or utilizes, short passages from some of the other writings included here.

For this seventh edition, I have added a detailed Introduction, a new appendix, and corrected some typos.

David Myatt  
2022

ooo

θάνατος δὲ τότε ἔσσεται ὁπότε κεν δὴ Μοῖραι ἐπικλώσωσ'

"Our ending arrives whenever wherever the Moirai decide."

Attributed to Καλλίνου, as recorded by Ἰωάννης Στοβαῖος in Ἀνθολόγιον (c. 5th century CE)

---

## Introduction

### Physis And Being

The numinous way - the philosophy - of pathei-mathos is based on four principles: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

In respect of the term numinous, it

"derives from the classical Latin *numen* and denotes 'a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power' with the word *numen* assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify 'of or relating to a *numen*; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual.'

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's *a priori* (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was *sui generis*, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi." Appendix VIII - Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition

In respect of empathy and pathei-mathos, they

"incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and pathei-mathos lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over



centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria – deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy – but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions – ancient and modern – usurp our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and pathei-mathos as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and pathei-mathos, however, wordlessly – sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites – uncover physis: our physis, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which physis, howsoever presented – in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being – is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the acausal) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a meson – μέσον [9] – with the potentiality to change, to develop) and thus which (i) is not – as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam – a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of physis) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion – our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings – also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of pathei-mathos. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presented in us but as capable of changing – unfolding, evolving – in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presented by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic θεός (god) and θεοὶ (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of living beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being – the cosmic order, the κόσμος – itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presented in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of

education or learning – nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κάγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how such a philosophy based on empathy and *pathei-mathos* might, in one way, be presented in a practical manner in the world.

οοοοο

## Notes

[1] I use the term *physis* – φύσις – ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (*persona*) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the *Poemandres* tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I generally use the term *denotatum* – from the Latin *denotare* – not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* the term *abstraction* signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of *denotatum*, in *Kratylus* 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (*denotatum*) – βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write *The State* instead of "the state" because I consider *The State/The Nation-State* a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written *The State* (or the *State*) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of *physis*) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the *physis* of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something – as for example Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος – but instead the *physis* of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικὴ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – *physis* denotes the quidditas of beings

having change ment inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are change ments predicated on it. For physis is inherent change ment either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of “what is real” – τῶν ὄντων – cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

φημὶ ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use the term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean “having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence.”

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive – as a change ment – was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity – the chief of the gods – capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes

"the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by ‘art-forms’ such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath – but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θεοῦ σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, Corpus Hermeticum.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

## Part One

### Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

- I. Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life
- II. Wisdom, Pathei-Mathos, and Humility
- III. Enantiodromia and The Separation-of-Otherness

---

#### I. Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy thus inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering.

For empathy enables us to directly perceive, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, qv. Appendix IV) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections, all assumed or believed categories or categorizations. For empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming – for a causal moment or moments – of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between them and us – there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life, of ψυχή, with our individuals self understood as just one fallible, fragile, microcosmic, mortal emanation of Life, and which emanation can affect other life in a good way or a bad way. In addition, empathy and pathei-mathos, provide us with the understanding that we human beings have the ability - the character - (or can develop the ability, the character) to understand and to restrain ourselves, to decide to do what is good and not do what is wrong. This ability of reason, this choice, and this ability to develop our character, are the genesis of culture and express our natural potential as human beings.

The numinous sympathy - συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) - with another living being that empathy provides naturally inclines us to treat other living beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with fairness, compassion, honour, and dignity. It also inclines us not to judge those whom we do not know; those beyond the purveu - beyond the range of - our faculty of empathy. There is thus or there develops or there can develop:

(i) Wu-wei, the cultivation of an inner balance arising from an appreciation of the natural change (the flux) of living beings and how it is unbalanced, and harsh, of us to interfere in ways which conflict with the natural character of such beings and with that natural change. Part of this appreciation is of the numinous; another is of our own limits and limitations because we ourselves are only a small part of such natural change, an aspect of which is Nature; and which appreciation of the numinous and of our limits incline us toward a certain humility.

(ii) An appreciation of innocence, for innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human and cultured, thing to do.

(iii) An appreciation of how and why a personal and loyal love between two individuals is the most beautiful, the most numinously human, thing of all.

Thus among the virtues of the philosophy - the way - of pathei-mathos are compassion; self-restraint [εὐταξία], fairness, honour; manners; wu-wei, and a reasoned personal judgement.

Living according to the way of pathei-mathos therefore simply means:

- being compassionate or inclining toward compassion by trying to avoid causing, or contributing, to suffering;
- being honourable - fair, reasonable, well-mannered, just, dignified, tolerant, balanced;
- appreciating the value and importance of personal love;
- inclining toward a personal humility;
- appreciating the numinous;
- cultivating empathy and wu-wei.

In essence, The Way of Pathei-Mathos is an ethical, an interior, a personal, a non-political, a non-interfering, a non-religious but spiritual, way of individual reflexion, individual change, and empathic living, where there is an awareness of the importance of virtues such as compassion, humility, tolerance, gentleness, and love.

---

## II. Wisdom, Pathei-Mathos, and Humility

Over millennia, the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals - often evident in Art, literature, memoirs, music, myths, legends, and often manifest in the ethos of a religious-type awareness or in spiritual allegories - has produced certain insights, certain intimations of wisdom, one of which was the need for a balance, for ἀρμονία, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits; an intimation evident in Taoism, and in Greek myths and legends where this unwise 'going beyond' is termed ὕβρις - hubris - and well-described by, for example, Sophocles in Antigone and Oedipus Tyrannus.

Another intimation of wisdom - and perhaps one of the most significant - is pathei-mathos, with Aeschylus writing, in his Agamemnon, that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is pathei-mathos. That is, that for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority; that the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Pathei-mathos thus, like empathy, offers a certain understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings. Or, expressed philosophically, they can reveal the nature of Being and beings.

Since the range of our faculty of empathy is limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment and to personal interactions, and since the learning wrought by pathei-mathos and pathei-mathos itself is and are direct and personal, then the knowledge, the understanding, that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal and provide is of the empathic scale of things and of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. That is, what is so revealed is not some grand or grandiose theory or praxis or philosophy which is considered applicable to others, or which it is believed can or should be developed to be applicable to others or developed to offer guidance beyond the individual in political and/or social and/or religious and/or ideological terms; but rather a very personal, individual, spiritual and thus interior, way. A way of tolerance and humility, where there is an acceptance of the unwisdom, the hubris, the unbalance, of arrogantly, pejoratively, making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience. That is, we are honest we do not know when we do not know; we accept that we do not have enough knowledge and/or experience to form and express an opinion about matters we have not studied and have no personal experience of, and about people we do not know and have not personally interacted with over a period of time. We accept that our empathy and pathei-mathos - our personal judgement, our experience, our interior appreciation of the numinous, the knowledge personally acquired - are what inform and guide us: not faith and not the rhetoric or the words or the passion or the propaganda or the ideas or the dogma or the policies or the ideology of others.

There is therefore an appreciation, a knowing, that is the genesis of a balanced and personal judgement -

a discernment – and which knowing is evidential of our perception of Being and beings. Which is of how all living beings are emanations of Being, of ψυχή, and of how the way of non-suffering-causing moral change and reform both personal and social is the way of individual, interior, change; of aiding, helping, assisting other individuals in a direct, a personal manner, and in practical ways, because our perception is that of the human scale of things; of ourselves as fallible, and of individuals as individuals, as fellow human beings presumed innocent and good, or capable of reforming change, until direct experience and knowledge of them reveals otherwise.

---

### **III. Enantiodromia and The Separation-of-Otherness**

The revealing concerning our own nature, our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide is, as mentioned previously, of how all living beings are emanations of ψυχή, and thus of what is beyond 'the separation-of-otherness' that our division (instinctive or otherwise) into our self and the others causes. A revealing that this 'separation-of-otherness' is mere causal appearance, and which appearance not only obscures the nature of Being and of beings, but is also the genesis of hubris, and thence of suffering; a path away from wisdom.

Part of this 'separation-of-otherness' is when we (again, instinctively or otherwise) divide people into assumed categories and thus assign to them some term or some label or some name. We then presume we 'know' them as we often then prejudge them on the basis of the qualities (or lack of them) we or others have assigned to or associate with that category or term or label or name. In addition, we often or mostly come to define ourselves - provide ourselves with identity and our life with meaning - by accepting or assuming or assigning ourselves (or allowing others to so assign us) to a human manufactured category or categories. However, all these categories, terms, labels, names - and the duties and responsibilities, and/or likes/dislikes, assigned to them - have been and are the genesis of suffering, for they lead to and have led to certain categories being regarded as 'better than', or opposed to, others, and from notions of superiority/inferiority, of liked/hated opposites/enemies, conflict arises; both personal conflict, and the supra-personal conflict of some human beings, assigned to or identifying with some category, fighting/killing/hating/subjugating some other human beings assigned to or identifying with some other category.

For millennia, the periodicity of such assigning to, such identification with, such conflict between, human manufactured categories has continued. Old categories fade away, or are renamed, or become extinct; new ones are manufactured. Sometimes, categories become merged, forming a new type, assigned a new name. And the suffering, the lack of understanding about the nature of Being and beings, 'the separation-of-otherness', continues.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

For all living religions, all living spiritual ways, manifest or have expressed or were founded to express this same wisdom. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Taoism, all - in their own particular way and beyond their different outer manifestations and the different terms and expressions and allegories used to elucidate 'that of the numinous' - express, enhance (or can enhance), our humanity: our ability to restrain ourselves, to admit our unknowing, to admit our mistakes, to perceive beyond our self and beyond 'the separation-of-otherness'. To be compassionate, forgiving, and receptive to humility and reformation.

Enantiodromia is therefore nothing new, accept that the process, the discovery, the reformation, is - in the philosophy of pathei-mathos - a natural one that does not involve any theory, or dogma, or praxis, or require any faith or belief of any kind. Rather, there is the personal cultivation of empathy, of wu-wei, an appreciation of the numinous, and the personal knowledge discovered by pathei-mathos; and that is all.

---

## Part Two

### The Way of Pathei-Mathos

#### A Philosophical Compendiary

- Introduction
- I - Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way
- II - The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy
- III - The Nature of Being and of Beings
- IV - An Appreciation of The Numinous
- Conclusion

---

#### Introduction

The philosophy of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) may be said to represent both the essence and the substance of what I have retained after refining and reflecting upon 'the numinous way' I developed between the years 2006 and 2011.

This year-long process of refinement and reflexion [2011-2012] led me to not only discard most of that 'numinous way' but also to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that initially inspired me to develop that 'numinous way', a re-expression contained in this 'way of pathei-mathos' essay and in the following three essays: (1) Some Personal Musings On Empathy; (2) Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual; (3) Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos. These four essays should also serve to distinguish my new philosophy from that old 'numinous way'.

The philosophy of πάθει μάθος, however, is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture, an appreciation that led me to translate works by Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Homer, and involved me in a detailed consideration of the weltanschauung of individuals such as Heraclitus (insofar as such weltanschauungen are known from recorded sayings and surviving books).

Given this appreciation, and as the name suggests, the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion.

In addition, and possibly somewhat unconventionally since in accord with the Hellenic etymology of the

word and the Homeric sense of φίλος <sup>[a]</sup> I view a philosopher as someone who is a friend of – whose companion is, who seeks to find, to acquire, to follow, to befriend – σοφόν. Thus in this sense, a philosopher is someone seeking to acquire a certain skill (such as the learning/reasoning that is λόγος) and discover a particular knowledge, such as a knowledge regarding Being and beings, rerum divinarum et humanarum; a knowledge acquired or found by means of both using λόγος and from life itself via practical experience, practical learning; a dual sense evident from the meaning and usage of σοφός.

Thus my personal understanding of philosophy is that it is the result of the activity and the life of a philosopher; more correctly perhaps, it is both the written or the recorded or transmitted results of the lucubrations that such way of life (that such a following, such a seeking, of knowledge and wisdom) engenders, and of what the living of such a life (that such befriending of σοφόν) brings-into-being and/or reveals. And it is in this sense that I consider my way of πάθει μάθος a philosophy.

All translations from Ancient Greek in this work are mine, and I have, at the suggestion of a friend, added a Glossary giving some brief explanations and definitions of some of the Greek and English terms used.

[a] For example, Odyssey, Book I, v.301-302

καὶ σύ, φίλος, μάλα γάρ σ' ὀρώω καλὸν τε μέγαν τε,  
ἄλκιμος ἔσσω, ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων ἐὺ εἴπῃ.

Thus should you, my friend - who I see are strong and fully-grown -  
Be as brave, so that those born after you will speak well of you.

---

## I Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

However, this expression should be understood in context [1], for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law – this new guidance laid down for mortals – is pathei-mathos.

Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority [2] – that is, the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

In many ways, this Aeschylean view is an enlightened – a very human – one, and is somewhat in contrast to the faith and revelation-centred view of religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. In the former, it is the personal experience of learning from, and dealing with, personal suffering and adversity, that is paramount and which possesses authority and 'meaning'. In the latter, it is faith that some written or transmitted work or works is or are a sacred revelation from the supreme deity one believes in which is paramount, which possess meaning and authority, often combined with a belief that this supreme deity has appointed or authorized some mortal being or beings, or some Institution, as their earthly representative(s), and which Institution and/or representative(s) therefore are believed to possess or are accepted as possessing authority or are regarded as authoritative.

Thus, the Aeschylean view is that learning, and hence wisdom, often or perhaps mostly arises from within us, by virtue of that which afflicts us (and which afflictions could well be understood as from the gods/Nature or from some supra-personal source) and from our own, direct, personal, practical, experience. In contrast, the conventional religious view is that wisdom can be found in some book (especially in some religious text), or be learnt from someone considered to be an authority, or who has been appointed as some authority by some Institution, religious or otherwise.



The essential difference between these two ways is therefore that pathei-mathos is the way of direct learning from personal experience, while the religious way is often or mostly the way of secondary or tertiary learning, from others; of accepting or believing what is written by or taught by someone else or laid down in some dogma, some creed, some book, or by some external authority, such as an Institution.

For The Way of Pathei-Mathos, it is the personal learning that pathei-mathos provides or can provide, combined with - balanced by - the insight, the knowing, that empathy provides, which are considered as possessing authority, and which can aid us to discover wisdom.

### **The Way of Pathei-Mathos**

The fundamental axioms of The Way of Pathei-Mathos are:

- 1) That human beings possess a mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain knowledge concerning the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings.
- 2) This type of knowing, this perception, is different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science [3], and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings.
- 3) That because of or following πάθει μάθος there is or there can be a change in, a development of, the nature, the character - the φύσις - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this πάθει μάθος, and which appreciation of the numinous includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect or ignorance (of the numinous), of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις itself is the genesis both of the τύραννος [4] and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the modern extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις [5] and thus are a cause of, or contribute to and aid, suffering.
- 4) This change, this development of the individual, is or can be the result of enantiodromia [6] and reveals the nature of, and restores in individuals, the natural balance necessary for ψυχή [7] to flourish - which natural balance is δίκη as Δίκη [8] and which restoration of balance within the individual results in ἁρμονίη [9], manifest as ἁρμονίη (harmony) is in the cultivation, in the individual, of wu-wei [10] and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement) [11].
- 5) The development and use of empathy, the cultivation of wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν, are thus a means, a way, whereby individuals can cease to cause suffering or cease to contribute to, or cease to aid, suffering.
- 6) The reason as to why an individual might so seek to avoid causing suffering is the reason, the knowledge - the appreciation of the numinous - that empathy and πάθει μάθος provide.
- 7) This appreciation of the numinous inclines or can incline an individual to living in a certain way and which way of life naturally inclines the individual toward developing, in a natural way - sans any methodology, praxis, theory, dogma, or faith - certain attributes of character, and which attributes of character include compassion, self-restraint, fairness, and a reasoned, a personal, judgement.

## II The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy

Empathy is, as an intuitive understanding, what was, can be, and often is, learned or developed by πάθει μάθος. That is, from and by a direct, personal, learning from experience and suffering. An understanding manifest in our awareness of the numinous and thus in the distinction we have made, we make, or we are capable of making, between the sacred and the profane; the distinction made, for example in the past, between θεοί and δαιμόνων and mortals, and thus manifest in that understanding of ὕβρις and δίκη which can be obtained from the works of Sophocles, and Aeschylus [12], and from an understanding of Φύσις evident in some of the sayings attributed to Heraclitus [13].

Understood by reference to such classical illustrations, empathy is thus what naturally predisposed us to appreciate δίκη and be aware, respectful of, the goddess, Δίκην [14], and thus avoid retribution for committing the error of ὕβρις, for disrupting the natural balance necessary for individual and communal well-being.

That is, a certain empathy is, and has been, the natural basis for a tradition which informs us, and reminds us - through Art, literature, myths, legends, the accumulated πάθει μάθος of individuals, and often through a religious-type awareness - of the need for a balance, for ἁρμονίη, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits.

As a used and a developed faculty, the perception that empathy provides is of undivided ψυχή and of the emanations of ψυχή, of our place in the Cosmic Perspective: of how we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life; and how other mortals and other living beings interact with us and can affect us, in a good or a harmful way.

Empathy thus involves a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections. In a simple way, empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming - for a causal moment or moments - of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between them and us - there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life itself.

This knowing-of another living-being and this knowledge of the Cosmic Perspective - this empathic awareness of Life - inclines us toward compassion; toward the human virtue of having συμπάθεια (sympatheia, benignity) with and toward other living beings. For such an awareness involves being sensitive to, respectful of, other Life, and not arrogantly, in a hubriatic manner, imposing ourselves or trying to impose ourselves on Life and its emanations. That is, there is the cultivation of the natural balance that is wu-wei because of our awareness of how other Life, other living-beings, can suffer, and how some-things, some actions, are unwise because they do or can cause suffering or have caused suffering.

In effect, empathy uncovers or can uncover the nature of our being and the nature of Being itself.

---

## III The Nature of Being and of Beings

Empathy uncovers the a-causal nature of Being; of how, as Heraclitus expressed it in fragment 53, beings have their genesis,

Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἄνθρωπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others

kept bound. [15]

and how

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia [16]

and why σωφρονεῖν is important:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίῃ ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer. [17]

Empathy also reveals why the assumption that abstracted, ideated, opposites apply to or should apply to living beings - and that they thus can supply us with knowledge and understanding of living being - disrupts the natural balance, resulting in a loss of ἁρμονία and συμπάθεια and is therefore a manifestation of the error of ὕβρις.

### **The Acausal Nature of Being**

The empathic perception of an undivided ψυχή and of living beings as emanations of ψυχή, and the knowledge of ourselves and one affective and effecting fallible mortal connexion to other life that such a perception provides, leads to an understanding of Being, of ψυχή, as a-causal: as beyond the linearity of a simple and direct cause-and-effect and beyond the supposition that we are separated beings. This perception - and this knowing of the acausal nature of Being deriving from it - is numinous; that is, of how beings are part of Being and of how they come-into-being, are affected and affecting, and so Change and are Change: of how Life flows and ebbs and continues undivided, unseparated, a-temporal, and is only temporarily manifest in particular beings only erroneously perceived by us as discrete entities, as separated beings.

As Heraclitus mentioned as recorded in fragment 52:

αἰὼν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιλῆϊ

For Aeon, we are a game, pieces moved on some board: since, in this world of ours, we are but children.

For the perception and the knowing of causality in respect of living beings is that of the-separation-of-otherness; a notion of causal and linear separation, of past-present-future, of independent beings that gives rise to two things. (1) Of how we human consider we are different from or similar to other individual human beings. A difference or a similarity deriving from posited, manufactured, ideated, categories to which we assign others and ourselves and from which we often or mostly derive our identity, our self-assurance, and our belief about their and our φύσις, or at least what we assume is a knowledge of such things. (2) Of how such separately existing human beings are not subject to - or can and should make themselves not subject to or can overcome or ignore - any external supra-personal non-physical (non-temporal) force or forces, and thus of how these separated human beings have or can acquire the ability, the skill, to 'determine their own destiny/fate/life' by some means if the right method, or some methodology, or some tool - such as some idea or theory - can be found or developed, or if they develop their physical prowess/intelligence/cunning or acquire sufficient wealth/power/influence/followers.

Such a purely causal perception and causal understanding of living beings - lacking as it does an awareness of, an appreciation and a feeling for the numinous, or wilfully ignoring the numinous - is the genesis of ὕβρις and can thus bring-into-being the τύραννος [4].

An example of this reliance on causal perception and causal understanding is Oedipus, as described by Sophocles in Oedipus Tyrannus. In his singular desire to find the killer of Laius, Oedipus oversteps the due limits, and upsets the natural balance both within, and external to, himself. He is blinded by mere causality (a linear thinking) and subsumed by personal feelings - by his overwhelming desire for a simple cause-and-effect solution to the plague and his prideful belief that he, a mortal, a strong man, and master

of the riddle of the Sphinx, can find or derive a solution. What results is tragedy, suffering, for himself and for others.

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,  
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,  
οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,  
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.  
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν  
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν  
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδέν ἀλγεινὸν παθών.

You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus,  
He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:  
What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?  
But what a tide of problems have come over him!  
Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals,  
To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until,  
Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.

(Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 1524-1530)

Another example is Creon, as described by Sophocles in his Antigone. Creon's pride and stubbornness, and his rigid adherence to his own, causal (temporal), mortal, edict – which overturns an ancestral custom established and maintained to 'please the gods' and implement a natural edict of the gods designed to give and maintain balance, harmony, among the community – leads to tragedy, to suffering.

The same thing occurred to Odysseus, who for all his prowess and mortal cunning could not contrive to return to his homeland as he wished nor save his friends, and

κπολλὰ δ' ὅ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,  
ἀρνύμενος ἦν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.  
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:  
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,  
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἥελίοιο  
ἦσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἦμαρ.

...whose vigour, at sea, was weakened by many afflictions  
As he strove to win life for himself and return his comrades to their homes.  
But not even he, for all this yearning, could save those comrades  
For they were destroyed by their own immature foolishness  
Having devoured the cattle of Helios, that son of Hyperion,  
Who plucked from them the day of their returning.

(Homer, Odyssey, vv.3-9)

Such emphasis by mortals on causality, arising from a lack of the acausal, the numinous, perspective that empathy and πάθει μάθος provide, is in effect an ignoring of, a wilful defiance of, or a forgetfulness of, the natural balance, of our own nature, and of the gods. Expressed un-theistically, it is a lack of, or a covering-up of, or an ignorance of, the the nature of Being and of beings, of who and why we are, and why wu-wei is a wise way to live.

Our nature - which empathy and πάθει μάθος can reveal - is that of a mortal being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

As Sophocles expressed it:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει...

σοφὸν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being...  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts - he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

Yet as empathy and πάθει μάθος also reveal, our nature is such that we also have hope and a choice. We can choose to be fair, rational, beings who appreciate and cultivate σωφρονεῖν; who appreciate the numinous and ἁρμονίη and who understand ὕβρις for the error, the misfortune, the unbalance, it is. Or we can, like Oedipus, Creon, Aegisthus, and the comrades of Odysseus, foolishly, recklessly, veer toward and embrace ἔρις and ὕβρις.

We can appreciate the numinous - be wary of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες. We can kindle and rekindle the 'fire of reason', and appreciate that when 'more is obtained than is necessary it is not kept'. Or we can take short-cuts, foolishly overladden ourselves, and in our recklessness believe we are immune to injury:

τὸν δ' ἄνευ λύρας ὅμως ὑμνωδεῖ  
θρῆνον Ἐρινύος αὐτοδίδακτος ἔσωθεν  
θυμός, οὐ τὸ πᾶν ἔχων  
ἐλπίδος φίλον θράσος.  
σπλάγχνα δ' οὔτοι ματά-  
ζει πρὸς ἐνδίκους φρεσὶν  
τελεσφόροις δίναις κυκώμενον κέαρ.  
εὐχομαι δ' ἐξ ἐμᾶς  
ἐλπίδος ψύθη πεσεῖν  
ἐς τὸ μὴ τελεσφόρον.

μάλα γέ τοι τὸ μεγάλας ὑγείας  
ἀκόρεστον τέρμα: νόσος γάρ  
γείτων ὁμότοιχος ἐρείδει.  
καὶ πότμος εὐθυπορῶν  
ἄνδρὸς ἔπαισεν ἄφαντον ἔρμα.  
καὶ πρὸ μέν τι χρημάτων  
κτησίων ὄκνος βαλὼν  
σφενδόνας ἀπ' εὐμέτρου,  
οὐκ ἔδυ πρόπας δόμος  
πημονᾶς γέμων ἄγαν,  
οὐδ' ἐπόντισε σκάφος.  
πολλὰ τοι δόσις ἐκ Διὸς ἀμφιλα-  
φῆς τε καὶ ἐξ ἀλόκων ἐπετειᾶν  
νῆστιν ὤλεσεν νόσον.

τὸ δ' ἐπὶ γὰρ πεσὼν ἅπαξ θανάσιμον  
πρόπαρ ἄνδρὸς μέλαν αἶμα τίς ἂν  
πάλιν ἀγκαλέσαιτ' ἐπαείδων;  
οὐδὲ τὸν ὀρθοδαῆ  
τῶν φθιμένων ἀνάγειν  
Ζεὺς ἀπέπαυσεν ἐπ' εὐλαβείᾳ;  
εἰ δὲ μὴ τεταγμένα  
μοῖρα μοῖραν ἐκ θεῶν  
εἶργε μὴ πλέον φέρειν,  
προφθάσασα καρδία  
γλῶσσαν ἂν τάδ' ἐξέχει.  
νῦν δ' ὑπὸ σκότῳ βρέμει  
θυμαλγῆς τε καὶ οὐδὲν ἐπελπομέν-  
α ποτὲ καίριον ἐκτολυπεύσειν  
ζωπυρουμένας φρενός.

And so, although I have no lyre, I sing:  
For there is a desire, within me - a self-taught hymn  
For one of those Furies,  
With nothing at all to bring me  
That cherished confidence - hope.  
And my stomach is by no means idle -

In fairness, it is from achieving a judgement  
That the beat of my heart continues to change.  
And so there is this supplication of mine:  
For this defeat of my hope to be false  
So that, that thing cannot be achieved.

In truth, that frequently unsatisfied goddess, Health,  
Has a limit - for Sickness, her neighbour,  
Leans against their shared fence;  
And it is the fate of the mortal who takes the short-cut  
To strike the unseen reef.  
And yet if - of those possessions previously acquired  
A fitting amount is, through caution, cast forth by a sling,  
Then the whole construction will not go under -  
Injurious over-loaded as it was -  
Nor will its hull be filled, by the sea.  
Often, the gifts from Zeus are abundant  
And there is, then, from the yearly ploughing,  
A death for famine's sickness.

But if once upon the earth there falls from  
A mortal that death-making black blood -  
What incantation can return it to his arms?  
Not even he who was correctly-taught  
How to bring back those who had died  
Was allowed by Zeus to be without injury.  
Were it not that Fate was ordained  
By the gods to make it fated  
That when more is obtained it is not kept,  
My heart would have been first  
To let my tongue pour forth these things.

But now, in darkness, it murmurs,  
Painfully-desiring, and having no hope of when  
There will be an opportunity to bring this to an end,  
Rekindling the fire of reason.

Aeschylus, Agamemnon, vv.990-1033

### **The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness**

The essence of the faculty of empathy is συμπάθεια with other living beings and which συμπάθεια involves a translocation of ourselves for a duration or durations of causal moments. There is thus a perception of the acausal, the numinous, reality underlying the causal division of beings, existents, into separate, causal-separated, objects and the subject-object relationship which is or has been assumed by means of the process of causal ideation to exist between such causally-separate beings. That is, and for instance, the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings - the-separation-of-otherness - is causal appearance and not an expression of the true nature of Being and beings.

The-separation-of-otherness obscures and disrupts our relation to ψυχή and thus obscures the nature of our being and the nature of Being itself, and amounts to ὕβρις. For, in place of an understanding, a knowing, and thus an appreciation and acceptance of what is numinous - and thus of the natural balance and of what/whom we should respect - the-separation-of-otherness results in the positing of abstract categories/idealised forms to which we, as living beings, are assigned and which categories and forms are regarded as what we should aspire to and/or compare ourselves to and what we are judged by or judge ourselves by.

In classical terms, the natural balance and those whom we should respect - manifest in ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαιμόνων and in those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαιμόνων - are arrogantly replaced by human manufactured, and fallible, ideations and which ideations do not in any way re-present the nature, the φύσις, of our being, the φύσις of other living beings, and φύσις of Being, and which φύσις is one of the living connexions, the numinosity, of ψυχή and thus of the Cosmic Perspective, a nature manifest, for we mortals, in an appreciation of the numinous and thus in living in a certain way because we understand the nature, the importance, of δίκη, of fairness, of not being excessive.

The result of such ὕβρις - of the-separation-of-otherness and of the arrogance assigning living beings to and judging them by lifeless abstractions, ideations; of neglecting θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαιμόνων - is ἔρις: strife, discord, disruption, conflict, suffering, misfortune, and a loss of

ψυχή and ἁρμονίη.

As Aeschylus mentioned, over two thousand years ago:

ἔστω δ' ἀπή-  
μαντον, ὥστ' ἀπαρκεῖν  
εὖ πραπίδων λαχόντα.  
οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἑπαλξις  
πλούτου πρὸς κόρον ἀνδρὶ  
λακτίσαντι μέγαν Δίκας  
βωμὸν εἰς ἀφάνειαν.

βιάται δ' ἅ τάλαινα πειθῶ,  
προβούλου παῖς ἄφερτος ἄτας.  
ἄκος δὲ πᾶν μάταιον. οὐκ ἐκρύφθη,  
πρέπει δέ, φῶς αἰνολαμπές, σίνος...

λιτᾶν δ' ἀκούει μὲν οὔτις θεῶν:  
τὸν δ' ἐπίστροφον τῶν  
φῶτ' ἄδικον καθαιρεῖ

For unharmed is the one  
Who rightly reasons that what is sufficient  
Is what is allotted to him.  
For there is no protection  
In riches for the man of excess  
Who stamps down the great altar of the goddess, Judgement,  
In order to hide it from view.

But vigorously endures Temptation -  
That already-decided daughter of unbearable Misfortune.  
And all remedies are in vain.  
Not concealed, but conspicuous -  
A harsh shining light -  
Is the injury...

But not one of the gods hears the supplications:  
Instead, they take down those persons  
Who, lacking fairness, turn their attentions to such things.

Aeschylus, Agamemnon. vv.379-389, vv. 396-402

---

#### IV

### An Appreciation of The Numinous

Empathy by its very nature - by its relocation, translocation, of ourselves into, and συμπάθεια with, the living other - naturally inclines us toward compassion, for to intentionally harm the living other is to feel, to know, that harm. Such harming might also upset, unbalance, hinder, or harm, the ψυχή we share with that and with other living beings and so in some way cause, or contribute to, or result in harm, suffering, or misfortune to us and/or to others now or on some future occasion or occasions.

In effect, compassion is a means to maintain ἁρμονίη and the natural balance of Life and thus to aid or contribute to our own ἁρμονίη and well-being as well as that of others.

Empathy - like πάθει μάθος - also inclines us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is it inclines us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence, with innocence being regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous thing to do.

Thus morality is, for The Way of Pathei-Mathos, a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Or, expressed another way, morality resides not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous. Personal virtues such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία, that quality of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

In practice, therefore, justice is not some abstract concept, some ideation, which it is believed can and should be administered by others and requiring the individual to accept, passively or willingly, some external authority. Rather, justice, like εὐταξία, like goodness, is numinous, living in the individual who - because of empathy, πάθει μάθος, awareness and appreciation of the numinous - is inclined to be fair, who is capable of restraint especially under adversity or duress; the individual of σωφρονεῖν who thus "can tell inner character from outer" and who thus has those personal qualities which can be expressed by one word: honour.

### **The Numinous Balance of Honour**

In many ways, the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence [15] of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack.

### **Wu-Wei and The Cultivation of Humility**

The knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an



appreciation of the numinous.

This knowledge and understanding, being of the wholeness, is that of the healthy, the interior, inward, and personal balance beyond the separation of beings – beyond πόλεμος and ὕβρις and thus beyond ἔρις; beyond the separation and thence the strife, the discord, which abstractions, ideations, encourage and indeed which they manufacture, bring-into-being. Among these ideations - and one which can often distance us from an appreciation of the numinous and thus from ἁρμονία - is that of a measured Time of fixed durations; and one which thus has a tendency to both artificially apportion out our lives, urge us to hastily strive for some ideation, and cause us to live and/or work at an artificial, un-harmonious, pace.

Empathy, wu-wei, πάθει μάθος, and a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous, also incline us toward the cultivation of humility as a prerequisite for us not to repeat our errors of ὕβρις, or the ὕβρις of others, and which mistakes of ὕβρις - ours and/or of others - we either are personally aware of or can become aware of through the recorded πάθει μάθος of our human cultures, manifest as this transmitted knowledge and personal learning often is in literature, Art, poetry, myths, legends, and music.

For our personal πάθει μάθος makes us aware of, makes us feel, know, remember, in a very personal sense, our fallibility, our mortality, our mistakes, our errors, our wrong deeds, the suffering we have caused, the harm we have done and inflicted; how much we personally have contributed to discord, strife, sorrow. Similarly, our appreciation of the numinous, together with empathy and the cultivation of wu-wei, makes us aware of, and feel, and understand, ὕβρις and the errors of ὕβρις in others past and present.

There is then, or there develops or there can develop, a personal inclination toward σωφρονεῖν; toward being fair, toward rational deliberation, toward a lack of haste, toward a living numinously. Toward a balanced judgement, and honour, and a knowing and appreciation of the wisdom that the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform that does not cause suffering - that is not redolent of ὕβρις - is the one that changes human beings in an individual way by personal example and/or because of πάθει μάθος, and thus interiorly changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate. That is what, individually, changes or rebalances bad φύσις and thus brings-into-being, or restores, good φύσις.

---

## Conclusion - The Way of Pathei-Mathos

It is the cultivation by individuals of empathy, of wu-wei, of a reasoned judgement, combined with (i) an appreciation of the numinous and of our accumulated pathei-mathos - evident, for example, in Hellenic culture, in other cultures, and often manifest in Art, literature, music, myths, legends, poetry - and (ii) the living of a compassionate life balanced by honour, which are the whole of The Way of Pathei-Mathos.

The Way of Pathei-Mathos is thus an ethical, an interior, a personal, a non-political, a non-religious, a non-interfering, way of individual reflexion and individual change.

There is nothing else. No given, no required, praxis. No 'secret wisdom' or 'secret teachings', no enlightenment to be taught. No methodology, no theology, and no need for faith or belief. There are no theories, no goals, no dogma, no texts and no one to be revered.

---

## Part Three

### Some Personal Musings On Empathy In relation to the philosophy of πάθει μάθος

#### Empathy and The Individual

The first axiom of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is:

That human beings possess a mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain knowledge concerning the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings. [19]

Being a natural faculty - like sight and hearing - empathy is personal, individual, and thus depends on and relates to what-is, and/or who-is, nearby: in range of our empathy. Thus the knowing we acquire or can acquire by empathy is a personal knowing just as seeing and listening to a person speaking is a personal knowing acquired directly in the immediacy-of-the-moment. If, however, a person be out of range of our empathy, and we have no previous empathic or personal encounters with them, they are empathically and personally unknown to us and therefore, since we have no knowledge or intimation of their physis, their character, we cannot fairly assess them and should accord them 'the benefit of the doubt' since this presumption of the innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the moral, the empathic, thing to do.

For empathy, according to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is considered the primary means whereby we can fairly assess [20] - that is, fairly judge - a person and thus know them (their physis) as they are, with this knowing, by the nature of our as yet undeveloped and underused faculty of empathy, of necessity requiring a personal and a direct experience of them extending over a period of time. In effect, our initial intuitions are either confirmed or modified by such direct contact, rather as most humans may require several periods of reading or of the hearing of some lengthy text in order to commit it to memory and be able to reproduce it, aurally or in writing.

There is thus what may be described as the empathic scale: that which or those who are reachable, knowable, by means of, in range of, our empathy; and it is this scale which, in essence, may be said to be a measure, a function and expression, of our humanity; which reveals, discovers, physis and thus what is important about ourselves, about other human beings, and about the other life with which we share this planet. Beyond the reach of empathy is the physis of beings we do not (as yet) personally know and we have to admit we do not know, and so cannot and should not be sure about or make claims about or formulate some theory or opinion about.

Everything others associate with an individual, or ascribe to an individual, or use to describe or to denote an individual, or even how an individual denotes or describes themselves, are not relevant, and have no bearing on our understanding, our knowledge, of that individual and thus - morally - should be ignored, for it is our personal knowing of them which is necessary, important, valid, fair. For assessment of another - by the nature of assessment and the nature of empathy - can only be personal, direct, individual. Anything else is biased prejudgement or prejudice or unproven assumption.

This means that we approach them - we view them - without any prejudice, without any expectations, and without having made any assumptions concerning them, and as a unique, still unknown, still undiscovered, individual person: as 'innocent' until proven, until revealed by their actions and behaviour to be, otherwise. Furthermore, empathy - the acausal perception/knowing and revealing of physis - knows nothing of temporal things and human manufactured abstractions/categories such as assumed or assigned ethnicity; nothing of gender; nothing of what is now often termed 'sexual preference/orientation'. Nothing of politics, or religion. Nothing of some disability someone may suffer from; nothing of social status or wealth; nothing regarding occupation (or lack of one). Nothing regarding the views, the opinions, of others concerning someone. For empathy is just empathy, a perception different from our other senses such as sight and hearing, and a perception which provides us, or which can provide us, with a unique perspective, a unique type of knowing, a unique (acausal) connexion to the external world and especially to other human beings.

Empathy - and the knowing that derives from it - thus transcends 'race', politics, religion, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, wealth (or lack of it), 'status', and all the other things and concepts often used to describe, to denote, to prejudge, to classify, a person; so that to judge someone - for example - by and because of their political views (real or assumed) or by their religion or by their sexual orientation is an act of hubris [ ὕβρις ].

In practice, therefore, in the revealing of the physis of a person, the political views, the religion, the gender, the perceived ethnicity, of someone are irrelevant. It is a personal knowing of them, the perception of their physis by empathy, and an acceptance of them as - and getting to know them as - a unique individual which are important and considered moral; for they are one emanation of the Life of which we ourselves are but one other finite and fallible part.

### **Concerning The Error of Extremism**

Extremism - as defined and understood by the philosophy of pathei-mathos - is a modern example of the error of hubris. An outward expression - codified in an ideology - of a bad individual physis (of a bad or faulty or misguided or underdeveloped/unmatured individual nature); of a lack of inner balance in individuals; of a lack of empathy and of pathei-mathos.

There is thus, in extremists, an ignorance of the true nature of Being and beings, and a lack of appreciation of or a wilful rejection of the numinous, as well as a distinct lack of or an aversion to personal humility, for it is the nature of the extremist that they are convinced and believe that 'they know' that the ideology/party/movement/group/faith that they accept or adhere to - or the leader that they follow - have/has the right answers, the correct solutions, to certain problems which they faithfully assert exist in society and often in human beings.

This conviction, this arrogance of belief, or this reliance on the assessment of someone else (some leader), combined with a lack of empathy and a lack of the insight and the self-knowing wrought by pathei-mathos, causes or greatly enhances an existing inner/interior dissatisfaction (an unbalance, a lack of harmony) within them in regard to what-is, so that some vision, some ideal, of the future - of society - becomes more important to them, more real, more meaningful, than people, than life, as people and life are now. Thus, they with their ideology, their faith, with and because of their dissatisfaction, possess or develop an urge to harshly interfere, continually finding fault with people, with society, with life itself, and so strive - mostly violently, hatefully, unethically, and with prejudice and often with anger - to undermine, to violently change, to 'revolutionize', or to destroy, what-is.

In simple terms, extremists fail to understand, to appreciate, to know, to apprehend, what is important about human beings and human living; what the simple reality, the simple nature, the real physis, of the majority of human beings and of society is and are, and thus what innocence means and implies. That is, there is a failure to know, to appreciate, what is good, and natural and numinous and innocent, in respect of human beings and of society. A failure to know, a failure to appreciate, a failure to feel what it is that empathy and pathei-mathos provide: the wisdom of our personal nature and personal needs; of our physis as rational - as balanced - human beings possessed of certain qualities, certain virtues, or capable of developing balance, capable of developing certain qualities, certain virtues, and thus having or of developing the ability to live in a certain manner: with fairness, with love, and without hatred and prejudice.

What is good, and natural - what should thus be appreciated, and respected, and not profaned by the arrogance (the hubris) of the extremist, and what empathy and pathei-mathos reveal - are the desire for personal love and the need to be loyally loved; the need for a family and the bonds of love within a family that lead to the desire to protect, care for, work for, and if necessary defend one's loved ones. The desire for a certain security and stability and peace, manifest in a home, in sufficiency of food, in playfulness, in friends, in tolerance, in a lack of danger. The need for the dignity, the self-respect, that work, that giving love and being loved, provide.

Our societies have evolved, painfully slowly, to try and provide such simple, such human, such natural, such ineluctably personal, things; to allow opportunities for such things; and have so evolved often because of individuals naturally gifted with empathy or who were inspired by their own pathei-mathos or that of others, and often and thus also so evolved because of the culture that such societies encouraged

and sometimes developed, being as such culture was - via, for example, literature, music, memoirs, poetry, Art - the recorded/aural pathos and empathic understanding of others often combined with the recorded/aural pathos and the empathic understanding of others in other societies. A pathos and an understanding that may form or in some manner express the ethos of a society, and thence become an inspiration for certain laws intended to express, in a society, what is considered to be moral and thus provide and maintain or at least aid valued human and personal qualities such as the desire for stability, peace, a loving home, sufficiency of food, and the need for the dignity of work.

But as I mentioned in some other musings regarding my own lamentable extremist past:

" Instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killing. Instead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia."  
Letter To My Undiscovered Self

For perhaps one of the worst consequences of the extremism of extremists - of modern hubris in general - is, or seems to me to be, the loss of what is personal, and thus what is human; the loss of the empathic, the human, scale of things; with what is personal, human, empathic, being or becoming displaced, scorned, forgotten, obscured, or a target for destruction and (often violent) replacement by something supra-personal such as some abstract political/religious notion or concept, or some ideal, or by some prejudice and some often violent intolerance regarding human beings we do not personally know because beyond the range of our empathy.

That is, the human, the personal, the empathic, the natural, the immediate, scale of things - a tolerant and a fair acceptance of what-is - is lost and replaced by an artificial scale posited by some ideology or manufactured by some τύραννος (tyrannos); a scale in which the suffering of individuals, and strife, are regarded as inevitable, even necessary, in order for 'victory to be achieved' or for some ideal or plan or agenda or manifesto to be implemented. Thus the good, the stability, that exists within society is ignored, with the problems of society - real, imagined, or manufactured by propaganda - trumpeted. There is then incitement to disaffection, with harshness and violent change of and within society regarded as desirable or necessary in order to achieve preset, predetermined, and always 'urgent' goals and aims, since slow personal reform and change in society - that which appreciates and accepts the good in an existing society and in people over and above the problems and the bad - is anathema to extremists, anathema to their harsh intolerant empathy-lacking nature and to their hubriatic striving:

" [The truth] in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long) that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism." Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate (Part Two)

Yet it is just such societies - societies painfully and slowly crafted by the sacrifice and the goodness of multitudes of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness - that extremists with their harsh intolerant empathy-lacking nature, their hubriatic striving, their arrogant certainty of belief, their anger and their need to harshly interfere, seek to undermine, overthrow, and destroy.

### **No Hubriatic Striving, No Impersonal Interference**

Since the range of empathy is limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment and to personal interactions, and, together with pathei-mathos, is a primary means to reveal the nature of Being and beings - and since the learning wrought by pathei-mathos and pathei-mathos itself is and are direct and personal - then part of the knowledge, the understanding, that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal and provide is the wisdom of physis and of humility. That is, of the empathic scale of things and of acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. Of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience, and (ii) of the unwisdom, the hubris, of adhering to some ideology or some belief or to some tyrannos and allowing that ideology or that belief or that tyrannos to usurp the personal judgement, the personal assessment, that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal and provide.

This acceptance of the empathic - of the human, the personal - scale of things and of our limitations as human beings is part of wu-wei. Of not-striving, and of not-interfering, beyond the purveu of our empathy and our pathei-mathos. Of personally and for ourselves discovering the nature, the physis, of beings; of personally working with and not against that physis, and of personally accepting that certain matters or many matters, because of our lack of personal knowledge and lack of personal experience of them, are unknown to us and therefore it is unwise, unbalanced, for us to have and express views or opinions concerning them, and hubris for us to adhere to and strive to implement some ideology which harshly deals with and manifests harsh views and harsh opinions concerning such personally unknown matters.

Thus what and who are beyond the purveu of empathy and beyond pathei-mathos is or should be of no urgent concern, of no passionate relevance, to the individual seeking balance, harmony, and wisdom, and in truth can be detrimental to finding wisdom and living in accord with the knowledge and understanding so discovered.

For wisdom, it seems to me, is simply a personal appreciation of the numinous, of innocence, of balance, of εὐταξία [21], of enantiodromia, and the personal knowing, the understanding, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide. An appreciation, a knowing, that is the genesis of a balanced personal judgement - of discernment - and evident in our perception of Being and beings: of how all living beings are emanations of ψυχή and of how the way of non-suffering causing moral change and reform both personal and social is the way of wu-wei. The way of personal, interior, change; of aiding, helping, assisting other individuals in a direct, a personal manner, and in practical ways, because our seeing is that of the human, the empathic, the muliebral, scale of things and not the scale of hubris, which is the scale either (i) of the isolated, egoist, striveful, unharmonious human being in thrall to their selfish masculous desires or (ii) of the human being unbalanced because in thrall to some tyrannos or to some harsh, extremist, ideology, and which harsh ideologies always manifest an unbalanced masculous, unempathic, nature redolent of that hubriatic certainty-of-knowing and that intolerant desire to interfere which mark and which have marked, and are and were the genesis of, the tyrannos.

---

## Part Four

### Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual

#### The Muliebral and the Masculous

The third axiom of The Way of Pathei-Mathos is:

That because of or following πάθει μάθος there is or there can be a change in, a development of, the nature, the character - the φύσις - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this πάθει μάθος, and which appreciation of the numinous includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect or ignorance (of the numinous), of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις itself is the genesis both of the τύραννος and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the modern extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις and thus are a cause of, or contribute to and aid, suffering.

This change, this development of the individual, is or can be the result of a process termed enantiodromia, which is the process of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, a relation manifest in the cosmic perspective and thus a knowing of ourselves as but one fallible, microcosmic, fragile, mortal, biological nexion connected to and not separate from all other Life.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within themselves, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'. A perception of opposites manifested in ideations such as those concerning assumed traits of character, and assumed or 'ideal' rôles, behaviour, and occupations, assigned to each person, and especially historically in the prejudice of how the rôle - the duty - of men is or should be to lead, to control, to govern, to possess authority, to dominate, to be master.

The discovery of enantiodromia is of how such a designated and perceived dichotomy is but illusive, unnecessary, unhealthy, appearance, and does not therefore express either the natural, the real, nature (φύσις) of our personal character, our being, or the real nature, the Φύσις, of Being itself. In essence, this is the discovery, mentioned by Heraclitus [22], concerning Πόλεμος and γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα; that all beings are naturally born - become perceived as separate beings - because of ἔρις, and their genesis (their 'father') is Πόλεμος.

Thus the strife, the discord, often engendered by an external and by the internal (within the individual) clash between such apparent opposites as the 'muliebral' and 'masculous' is one that has naturally arisen due to misperception, due to the separation-of-otherness, as a result of a purely causal, egoist, apprehension of ourselves and of others; an error of perception that, as previously mentioned, empathy and πάθει μάθος can correct, and which correction reveals the truth of ψυχή and a knowing of the cosmic perspective.

One practical consequence of this misapprehension, this error of ὕβρις, concerning 'muliebral' and 'masculous' has been the distaste - even the hatred - of certain ideologies and religions and individuals for those whose personal love is for someone of the same gender. Another practical consequence is and has been the error of extremism, where what is masculous is emphasized to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and where, for example, as in many harsh ideologies, men and women are expected, encouraged - often forced, as for example in fascism - to assume some rôle based on or deriving from some manufactured abstraction, some ideation, concerning what is assumed to be or has been posited as 'the ideal man' or the 'ideal woman' in some idealized society or in some idealized 'nation'.

Furthermore, given that these attributes of personal character that have been termed 'muliebral' and

'masculous' are founded on an illusive apprehension of beings and Being - and on ideations (such as rôles, occupations, and so on) posited as a result of this misapprehension - they not symbolic, or mythological, or unconscious, or even archetypal in the sense of anima and animus.

### **A Natural Reformation**

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being; that, in essence, αἰὼν παῖς ἔστι παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιληΐη [23], that τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός [24] and that Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ [25].

Which in practical terms simply amounts to understanding, knowing, Being and the genesis, the φύσις, of beings. Or, expressed in terms of the philosophy of pathei-mathos, it amounts to wu-wei, and to the understanding that 'what and who' are out of range of our empathy and what and who we have no personal knowledge of, is and are of no concern, of no passionate relevance, for us, because 'beyond the control, the influence' of our own fallible, error-prone, nature, and should thus be regarded 'without prejudice', as 'innocent', and the subject of no opinion, no ideations, by us. That is, we accept empathy and pathei-mathos as our guide, and (i) we do not speculate about, do not manufacture our own ideations about, those whom and that which are beyond the purveu of our empathy; and (ii) we do not accept the ideations/abstractions of others concerning those whom and that which are beyond the purveu of our empathy, and who and which we have no direct personal experience of.

Thus the process, the discovery, the reformation, is a natural one that does not involve any theory, or dogma, or praxis, or require any faith or belief of any kind. There is the personal cultivation of empathy and wu-wei, and that is all. How then - for those not having endured a personal πάθει μάθος - might empathy and wu-wei be cultivated, and thus how might the natural balance be found/restored, thus allowing ψυχὴ to flourish, bringing ἁρμονίη and σωφρονεῖν?

We might let go of ideations, of causal abstractions, many or most of which only serve to try and distinguish us from them, from other living-beings, human or otherwise, and thus increase our illusion of separation. We might consider, ponder on, the cosmic perspective and learn to value tolerance and humility. We might muse on innocence and the nature of the good, for the good is simply what is fair; what is compassionate, what inclines us to appreciate the numinous and understand why ὕβρις is an error of unbalance. We might consider why, for example, the bad is just bad φύσις. Or a natural consequence of undeveloped, unformed, not-mature, unreformed φύσις. Of a lack of empathy, of a lack of εὐταξία, of little or no appreciation of, of no personal experience of, the numinous, leading thus to individuals doing what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering.

We could, for example, and perhaps importantly, learn from the culture of our society and that of others, for correctly appreciated such culture - as manifest, for example, in literature, music, memoirs, poetry, history, Art, and sometimes in myths and legends and religious allegories - is but the recorded/aural pathei-mathos and empathic understanding of others over decades, centuries, millennia.

---

## **Part Five**

### **Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos**

#### **Modern Society and The Individual**

Society, in the context of this essay, refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern 'democratic' West) and means a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of The State, and which State is predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority [26].

In modern societies, change and reform are often therefore introduced or attempted by The State most usually: (1) on the basis of the manufacture of some law or laws which the individuals, and the established institutions, of the area governed by The State are expected to obey on pain of some type of individual punishment, financial and/or physically punitive (as in prison); or (2) by means of State-sponsored or State-introduced schemes such as, for example, the British National Health Service and which schemes are invariably enshrined in law.

The essence of such change and reform of a society - large-scale, effective, rapid change and reform in society - is therefore, for the majority of people, external, and most often derives from some posited or assumed or promised agenda of the government of the day; that is, derived from some political or social or economic theory, axiom, idea, or principle, posited by others, be these others, for example, politicians, or social/political/economic theorists/reformers (and so on).

There is thus a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with their being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order.

Objectively, this process of change and reform by means of a hierarchy of judgement manifest in laws, and of State authority and power sufficient to enforce such laws, has resulted in fairly stable societies which are, for perhaps the majority of people, relatively peaceful, not overtly repressive, and - judged by the criteria of past societies and many non-Western societies - relatively prosperous.

Thus, while many problems - social and economic - remain and exist in such societies, with some such problems getting worse, such societies work reasonably well, contain an abundance of well-intentioned, moral, individuals, and appear to be better than the alternatives both tried in the past and theorized about. Hence it is not surprising that perhaps the majority of people within such societies favour solving such problems as do exist by existing social, political, and economic means; that is, by internal social, political, and economic, reform rather than by violent means and the advocacy of extremist ideologies.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, and the problems, within society are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, committed to or interested in helping those affected by such flaws and problems, and thus not only trying to improve society but also to finding and implementing solutions in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, the intolerance, of extremism.

For, while most large-scale, effective, rapid change and reform in society tends to be by enforceable State laws and State-sponsored schemes, change and reform also and significantly occurs and has occurred within society, albeit often more slowly, through the efforts of individuals and groups and organizations devoted to charitable, religious, or social causes and which individuals and groups and organizations by their very nature are invariably non-violent and often non-political. Furthermore, such non-violent, non-political, individuals and groups and organizations often become the inspiration for reform and change introduced by The State.

### **Some Problems of Modern Society**

Before outlining a possible numinous approach to reform and change, based on the philosophy of pathei-mathos, it would perhaps be useful to outline some of the social problems that still beset modern societies. What therefore constitutes a social problem within a society? How is such a problem defined?

In essence, it is an undesirable circumstance or way of living that affects a number of people and which undesirable circumstance or way of living others in society are or become aware of; with what is undesirable being - according to the ethics of the philosophy of pathei-mathos [27] - that which is, or those who are, unfair; that which deprives or those whom deprive a human being of dignity and honour; and that which is and those who are uncompassionate.

Thus, among the many problems of modern societies are misogyny; ethnic and religious discrimination, hatred, and prejudice; and social/economic inequality.



For example, misogyny - from the Greek μισογύνης - is unfairness toward, and/or prejudice and discrimination against, women. Often, as in the past, this is a consequence of an existing prejudice in a man: for example, that men are somehow better than women, or that women are 'useful' only for or suited to certain things; or that the subservience of women, and thus their domination/control by men, is 'a natural and necessary' state of human existence.

Misogyny in individual practice often results in men being violent/domineering toward, or selfishly manipulative and controlling of, women; and thus in them treating women in a dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate way.

Similarly, a hatred or dislike of or discrimination against an individual or a group of individuals on the basis of their perceived or assumed ethnicity is treating that individual or group in a dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate way.

Thus such social problems are often the result, the consequence of, a lack of empathy in a person, with this lack of συμπάθεια with other human beings having often in the past been evident in the treatment of people and individuals by governments, States, and institutions, and often revealed in and through discriminatory, unfair, uncompassionate laws.

### **A Numinous and Non-Political Approach**

Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means.

For, as mentioned in *Part Two: Some Personal Musings On Empathy*,

" [the] acceptance of the empathic - of the human, the personal - scale of things and of our limitations as human beings is part of wu-wei. Of not-striving, and of not-interfering, beyond the purveu of our empathy and our pathei-mathos. Of personally and for ourselves discovering the nature, the physis, of beings; of personally working with and not against that physis, and of personally accepting that certain matters or many matters, because of our lack of personal knowledge and lack of personal experience of them, are unknown to us and therefore it is unwise, unbalanced, for us to have and express views or opinions concerning them, and hubris for us to adhere to and strive to implement some ideology which harshly deals with and manifests harsh views and harsh opinions concerning such personally unknown matters.

Thus what and who are beyond the purveu of empathy and beyond pathei-mathos is or should be of no urgent concern, of no passionate relevance, to the individual seeking balance, harmony, and wisdom, and in truth can be detrimental to finding wisdom and living in accord with the knowledge and understanding so discovered. "

This means that there is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example.

### **An Experience of The Numinous**

The change that the philosophy - the way - of pathei-mathos seeks to foster, to encourage, is the natural, slow, interior and personal change within individuals; that is, the change of personal character by the individual developing and using their faculty of empathy and inclining toward being compassionate and honourable by nature. In essence, this is a numinous - a spiritual - change in people, a change of perspective, quite different from the supra-personal social change based on laws desired by modern States and by those who champion or who employ political, economic, and social theories regarding society, government, and the individual.

This interior personal change, by its numinous and ethical nature, is one that does not seek to reform society through politics or by any type of agitation, or through the use of force, or by means of any type of organization, social, political, economic, religious. Instead, such numinous change is the reform of individuals on a personal, individual, and cultural basis; by personal example and by individuals cultivating, in accordance with wu-wei, conditions and circumstances whereby they themselves and others can move toward συμπάθεια with other human beings through a personal knowing and experience of the numinous. Such a knowing and experience of the numinous can be cultivated by a variety of means, for example by harmonious surroundings; through an appreciation of, and a living in balance with, Nature; by love and respect and manners and a desire for peace; by periods of interior and exterior silence; through culture and thus through music, Art, literature, an understanding of history, and through respect for and tolerance of the many religions and spiritual Ways which have arisen over millennia and which may manifest the numinous or something of the numinous.

---

## **Part Six**

### **The Change of Enantiodromia**

#### **The Meaning of Enantiodromia**

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

This unusual word is usually translated as something like 'conflict of opposites' or 'opposing forces' which I consider are incorrect for several reasons.

Firstly, in my view, a transliteration should be used instead of some translation, for the Greek expression suggests something unique, something which exists in its own right as a principle or 'thing' and which uniqueness of meaning has a context, with both context and uniqueness lost if a bland translation is attempted. Lost, as the uniqueness, and context, of for example, δαιμόνων becomes lost if simply translated as 'spirits' (or worse, as 'gods'), or as the meaning of κακός in Hellenic culture is lost if mistranslated as 'evil'.

Second, the context seems to me to hint at something far more important than 'conflict of opposites', the context being the interesting description of the philosophy of Heraclitus before and after the word occurs, as given by Diogenes Laërtius:

1) ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι

2) εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι

3) πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα

4) καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

The foundation/base/essence of all beings [ 'things' ] is pyros to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons.

This raises several interesting questions, not least concerning ψυχή and δαιμόνων, but also regarding the sense of πυρὸς. Is pyros here a philosophical principle - such as ψυχή - or used as in fragment 43, the source of which is also Diogenes Laërtius:

ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊῇν (ix 2)

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

Personally, I incline toward the former, of some principle being meant, given the context, and the generalization - ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα. In respect of ψυχῶν καὶ δαιμόνων I would suggest that what is implied is the numinous, our apprehension of The Numen, and which numen is the source of ψυχή and the origin of Dæmons. For a δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but another type of divinity (that is, another emanation of the numen; another manifestation of the numinous) who might be assigned by those numinous gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or who watch over certain human beings and especially over particular numinous (sacred) places.

Thus the above summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus might be paraphrased as:

The foundation of all beings is Pyros to which they return, with all by genesis appropriately apportioned to be bound together again by enantiodromia, with all beings suffused with [are emanations of] the numen.

Furthermore, hubris disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of the numen, our appreciation of ψυχή and of Dæmons: of what is numinous and what/whom we should respect. A disruption that makes us unbalanced, makes us disrespect the numinous and that of the numinous (such as δαιμόνων and θεοί and sacred places), and which unbalance enantiodromia can correct, with enantiodromia suggesting a confrontation - that expected dealing with our hubris necessary in order to return to Pyros, the source of beings. Here, Pyros is understood not as we understand 'fire' - and not even as some sort of basic physical element among other elements such as water - but rather as akin to both the constant 'warmth and the light of the Sun' (that brings life) and the sudden lightning that, as from Zeus, can serve as warning (omen) and retribution, and which can destroy and be a cause of devastating fire and thus also of the regeneration/rebuilding that often follows from such fires and from the learning, the respect, that arises from appreciating warnings (omens) from the gods. All of which perhaps explains fragment 64:

τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός

All beings are guided by Lightning

## Enantiodromia in the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, enantiodromia is understood as the process - the natural change - that occurs or which can occur in a human being because of or following πάθει μάθος. For part of πάθει μάθος is a 'confrontational contest' - an interior battle - and an acceptance of the need to take part in this battle and 'face the consequences', one of which is learning the (often uncomfortable) truth about one's own unbalanced, strife-causing, nature.

If successful in this confrontation, there is or there can be a positive, moral, development of the nature,

the character - the φύσις (physis) - of the person because of that revealing and that appreciation (or re-appreciation) of the numinous whose genesis is this pathei-mathos, and which appreciation includes an awareness of why ὕβρις is an error (often the error) of unbalance, of disrespect, of a going beyond the due limits, and which ὕβρις is the genesis of the τύραννος and of the modern error of extremism. For the tyrannos and the extremist (and their extremisms) embody and give rise to and perpetuate ἔρις [28].

Thus enantiodromia reveals the nature of, and restores in individuals, the natural balance necessary for ψυχή to flourish - which natural balance is δίκη as Δίκη [29] and which restoration of balance within the individual results in ἁρμονία [30], manifest as ἁρμονία is in the cultivation, in the individual, of wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

---

## Part Seven

### The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic

- I - Opposites and Dialectic as Abstractions
- II - The Error of Polemos as Kampf
- III - Being and Empathy

#### I - Opposites and Dialectic as Abstractions

For well over a hundred years there has been a belief that some kind of process, or dialectic, between or involving certain, particular, opposites might lead us to answer questions such as Quid est Veritas?, could lead to a certain understanding of ourselves, and may well express something of the true nature of reality, of Being itself. In varying degrees this belief is evident, for instance, in Hegel, Nietzsche (with his Wille zur macht), Marx, and those espousing the doctrine that has been termed Social Darwinism.

In addition, and for a much greater span of causal Time, this belief has been an essential part of certain religions where the process is often expressed eschatologically and in a conjectured conflict between the abstract opposites of 'good' and 'evil', God and Devil, and such things as demons and angels.

This notion of opposites, of two distinct, separate, things is much in evidence in Plato, and indeed, philosophically, the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites may be said to have begun with Plato. For instance, he contrasts πόλεμος with στάσις (Conflict/strife contrasted with stasis/stability) thus:

ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῇ τοῦ οἰκείου ἔχθρᾳ στάσις κέκληται, ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου πόλεμος. Rep. V 470b

In respect of these two forms, Plato tries to explain that while there are two terms, two distinct namings - πόλεμος and στάσις - what are so denoted are not just two different names but express what he regards as the reality - the being, οὐσία - of two differing contrasted beings; that is, he posits what we would call two different ideations, or abstractions, creating an abstract (idealized) form for one and an abstract (idealized) form for the other.

Some centuries later, Diogenes Laërtius - apparently paraphrasing Heraclitus - wrote in his Lives of Eminent Philosophers:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia [31].

Which might seem to suggest that a certain mis-understanding of Heraclitus [32]. the ideation of Plato and of later philosophers and theologians, was the genesis of abstractions and of this belief that a so-called conflict of opposites can lead to 'truth', and explain the nature of Being and beings.

However, this ideation, this development of abstractions, and this process of a dialectic, led to the philosophical error of the separation of beings from Being so that instead of the revealing that would answer Quid est Veritas? there is ὕβρις with the numinous authority of an individual πάθει μάθος replaced by adherence to some dogmatic dialectical process involving some assumed struggle/conflict. That is, by considering ἀρχή as the cause of the abstractions which are opposites and the origin of a dialectic, and which opposites, and which dialectic involving them, are said to manifest the nature of both our being and of Being itself.

This is an error because Πόλεμος is neither kampf nor conflict, but rather - as the quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests - what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being which, though we have a natural tendency to separate into portions (that is, to perceive beings as only beings), beings themselves become revealed as bound together again by us facing up to the expected contest: that is, to our human nature and to knowing, to developing, to using, our faculty of reasoned judgement - σωφρονεῖν - to uncover, to reveal, via λόγος, the true nature of Δίκη and thus restore ἁρμονίη [33].

That is, instead of this abstraction of a dialectic there is, as I have suggested elsewhere:

A natural process of Change, of ἀρχή which we apprehend as Φύσις - as Heraclitus expressed in fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας.

This suggests that what is most excellent [ ἀρετὴ ] is thoughtful reasoning [σωφρονεῖν] - and that such thoughtful reasoning is a process which not only expresses and uncovers meaning, but which is also in accord with, in harmony or in sympathy with, φύσις - that is, with our own nature as mortals and with the nature of Being itself. [34]

## II - The Error of Polemos as Kampf

In a fragment attributed to Heraclitus [35] Πόλεμος is generally regarded as a synonym for either kampf, or more generally, for war; with the fragment then considered to mean something such as: strife (or war) is the father of every-thing. This interpretation is said to compliment another fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]. Fragmentum 80.

This is generally considered to mean something abstract such as: war is everywhere and strife is justice and all that is arises and passes away because of strife.

However, I contend that this older understanding of - the accepted rendition of - Πόλεμος is a misinterpretation of Πόλεμος [36], and that rather than kampf (struggle), or a general type of strife, or what we now associate with the term war, Πόλεμος implies the acausality (a simultaneity) beyond our causal ideation, and which ideation has separated object from subject, and often abstracted them into seemingly conflicting opposites. Hence my interpretation of Fragmentum 53:

Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἄνθρωπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

Hence also my interpretation of εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών] as:

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [37]

Thus the suggestion is that Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but not only that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, but also that which manifests as δίκη and accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being (become bound together - be whole - again).

For it is perhaps interesting that in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) married a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) [38] and that it was a common folk belief that πόλεμος accompanied ὕβρις - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing ἔρις.

As a result of ἔρις, there often arises πάθει μάθος - that practical and personal knowing, that reasoned understanding which, according to Aeschylus [39] is the new law, the new understanding, given by Zeus to replace the older more religious and dogmatic way of fear and dread, often viewed as Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [40]. A new understanding which Aeschylus sought to explain in the Oresteia.

### III - Being and Empathy

This understanding is basically that of a particular balance, born from πάθει μάθος (from the personal knowing of the error, the unbalance, that is ὕβρις) and from using reasoned judgement (σωφρονεῖν), and both of which make us aware of the true nature of our φύσις and of Φύσις itself.

In addition, by cultivating and by using our natural faculty of empathy, we can understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings - and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being [41] and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation implicit on opposites and dialectic), is a covering-up of Being and of Πόλεμος and thus involves a misunderstanding of both Δίκη and of φύσις.

In place of the numinosity of ψυχή - of Life qua being - there is, for the apprehension that is a dialectic of opposites, the hubris of abstractions, and thus a loss of our natural balance, a loss of ἁρμονίη [42] and συμπάθεια.

---

### Footnotes

[1]

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων  
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:  
ὃν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-  
σαντα, τὸν πάθει μάθος  
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,  
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;  
Of he who guided mortals to reason,  
Who laid down that this possesses authority:  
Learning from adversity.

Aeschylus: Agamemnon, 174-183

[2] An awareness of the numinous is what predisposes us not to commit the error, the folly, of ὕβρις. As Sophocles wrote in Oedipus Tyrannus:

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:  
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,

ἄ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,  
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'  
αἵπος ἀπότομον ὥρυσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν,  
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ  
χρῆται

Insolence plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use... (vv.872ff)

In respect of the numinous, basically it is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

We are reminded of this natural balance, of what is numinous - we can come to know, to experience, the numinous and thus can understand the nature of our being - by πάθει μάθος and empathy. That is, by the process of learning from personal adversity/personal suffering/personal grief and by using and developing our faculty of empathy.

An aspect of this learning is an appreciation, an awareness, of the Cosmic Perspective: of ourselves as one fallible, mortal, fragile biological, microcosmic, nexion on one planet in one Galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies; one connexion to, one emanation of, all other Life. In essence, πάθει μάθος and empathy teach us or can teach us humility, compassion, and the importance of personal love.

[3] The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; that is, on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation, with the important and necessary proviso, expressed by Isaac Newton in his Principia, that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearance..... for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

[4] The sense of τύραννος is not exactly what our fairly modern term tyrant is commonly regarded as imputing. Rather, it refers to the intemperate person of excess who is so subsumed with some passion or some aim or a lust for power that they go far beyond the due, the accepted, bounds of behaviour and thus exceed the limits of or misuse whatever authority they have been entrusted with. Thus do they, by their excess, by their disrespect for the customs of their ancestors, by their lack of reasoned, well-balanced, judgement [σωφρονεῖν] offend the gods, and thus, to restore the balance, do the Ἐρινύες take revenge. For it is in the nature of the τύραννος that they forget, or they scorn, the truth, the ancient wisdom, that their lives are subject to, guided by, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες -

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.  
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?  
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 515-6

[5] Heraclitus, fragment 80:

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ  
χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

See my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

In respect of the modern error of ὕβρις that is extremism, an error manifest in extremists, my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious. See Appendix VII.

[6] See *The Change of Enantiodromia*.

[7] The meaning here of ψυχή is derived from the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, etcetera, and implies Life qua being. Or, expressed another way, living beings are emanations of, and thus manifest, ψυχή. This sense of ψυχή is beautifully expressed in a, in my view, rather mis-understood fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

ψυχῇσι θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχή. Fragment 36

Where the water begins our living ends and where earth begins water ends, and yet earth nurtures water and from that water, Life.

[8] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to Appendix I - The Principle of Δίκη.

[9] Although φύσις has a natural tendency to become covered up (Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - concealment accompanies Physis) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[10] Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

[11] Heraclitus, fragment 112:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίῃ ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

[12] In particular, The Agamemnon of Aeschylus; and the Oedipus Tyrannus, and Antigone, of Sophocles. In respect of Oedipus Tyrannus, refer, for example, to vv.863ff and vv.1329-1338

In much mis-understood verses in The Agamemnon (1654-1656) Clytaemnestra makes it known that she still is aware of the power, and importance, of δίκη. Of not killing to excess:

μηδαμῶς, ὧ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, ἄλλα δράσωμεν κακά.  
ἀλλὰ καὶ τάδ' ἐξαμῆσαι πολλά, δύστηνον θέρος.  
πημονῆς δ' ἄλις γ' ὑπάρχει: μηδὲν αἵματώμεθα.



The aforementioned verses are often mis-translated to give some nonsense such as: 'No more violence. Here is a monstrous harvest and a bitter reaping time. There is pain enough already. Let us not be bloody now'.

However, what Aeschylus actually has Clytaemnestra say is:

"Let us not do any more harm for to reap these many would make it an unlucky harvest: injure them just enough, but do not stain us with their blood."

She is being practical (and quite Hellenic) and does not want to bring misfortune (from the gods) upon herself, or Aegisthus, by killing to excess. The killings she has done are, however, quite acceptable to her - she has vigorously defended them claiming it was her natural duty to avenge her daughter and the insult done to her by Agamemnon bringing his mistress, Cassandra, into her home. Clytaemnestra shows no pity for the Elders whom Aegisthus wishes to kill: "if you must", she says, "you can injure them. But do not kill them - that would be unlucky for us." That would be going just too far, and overstep what she still perceives as the natural, the proper, limits of mortal behaviour.

[13] Two fragments attributed to Heraclitus are of interest in this respect - 112, and 123. Refer to my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

[14] Hesiod, Theogony v. 901 - Εὐνουμίην τε Δίκην τε καὶ Εἰρήνην τεθαλυῖαν

In effect, a personified Judgement is the goddess of the natural balance - evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community - whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer's Odyssey:

νῦν δ' ἐθέλω ἔπος ἄλλο μεταλλῆσαι καὶ ἐρέσθαι  
Νέστορ', ἐπεὶ περὶ οἶδε δίκας ἡδὲ φρόνιν ἄλλων  
τρὶς γὰρ δὴ μὲν φασὶν ἀνάξασθαι γένε' ἀνδρῶν  
ὥς τέ μοι ἀθάνατος ἰνδάλλεταί εἰσοράσθαι

Book III, 243-246

I now wish to ask Nestor some questions to find out about some other things,  
For he understands others and knows more about our customs than them,  
Having been - so it is said - a Chieftain for three generations of mortals,  
And, to look at, he seems to me to be one of those immortals

[15] Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

Thus πόλεμος - like ψυχή and πάθει μάθος and ἐναντιοδομίας and ὕβρις and δίκη as δίκη/Δίκην/Δίκη - is a philosophical principle and should therefore in my view not be blandly translated by a single word or term, but rather should be left untranslated or be transliterated, thus requiring for its understanding a certain thoughtful reasoning and thence interpretation according to context.

In respect of such interpretation, it is for example interesting that in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) married a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) and that it was a common folk belief that πόλεμος accompanied ὕβρις - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing ἔρις.

[16] See Appendix VII. The saying - attributed to Heraclitus - is from Diogenes Laërtius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (ix. 7)

[17] Fragment 112.

[18] For an explanation is what is meant here by innocence, see the entry in Appendix VII.

[19] Part I: The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary

[20] To assess is to reasonably consider and thus arrive at a balanced, a reasonable, a fair, judgement/assessment.

[21] qv. 'An Appreciation of The Numinous' in The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary

[22] Fragments 53 and 80

[23] Fragment 52

[24] Fragment 64

[25] Fragment 123

[26] The State is defined in Appendix VI - A Glossary of Terms.

As mentioned elsewhere, I am somewhat idiosyncratic regarding capitalization (and spelling), and capitalize certain words, such as State, and often use terms such as The State to emphasize the philosophical truth of State as entity.

[27] The ethics of the way of pathei-mathos are the ethics of empathy - of συμπάθεια. In practical personal terms, this means dignity, fairness, balance (δίκη), reason, a lack of prejudgement, and the requirement of a personal knowing and of personal experience, of πάθει μάθος.

An ethical person thus reveals, possesses, εὐταξία - the quality, the personal virtue, of self-restraint; of personal orderly (balanced, honourable, well-mannered) conduct, a virtue especially evident under adversity or duress.

Thus, and as mentioned in Part Three - Enantiodromia and The Reformation of The Individual, the good is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what empathy by its revealing inclines us to do, what inclines us to appreciate the numinous and why ὕβρις is an error of unbalance.

Hence the bad - what is wrong, immoral - is what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering, with what is bad often considered to be due to a lack of empathy and of πάθει μάθος in a person, and a consequence of a bad φύσις, of a bad, a rotten, or an undeveloped, unformed, not-mature, individual character/nature. In effect, such a bad person lacks εὐταξία, has little or no appreciation of the numinous, and is often in thrall to their hubriatic and/or their masculous desires.

[28] Heraclitus, fragment 80: εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

See my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

[29] In respect of the numinous principle of Δίκη, refer to Appendix I.

[30] Although φύσις has a natural tendency to become covered up (Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - concealment accompanies Physis) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[31] I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - ἐναντιοδρομίας - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual.

[32] Refer to my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes*. (Fifth Edition, 2012)

[33] While Φύσις (Physis) has a natural tendency to become covered up (Heraclitus, Fragment 123) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[34] In *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race*.

[35] Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἄνθρωπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους. Fragmentum 53.

[36] See my *Heraclitus - Some Translations and Notes* (Fifth Edition, 2012) where I suggest a new interpretation of Fragmentum 53: Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

[37] I have deliberately transliterated (instead of translated) polemos, and left δίκη as δίκη. In respect of δίκη, see Appendix VII - Glossary of Terms.

Alternative renderings of the fragment are:

a) One should be aware that polemos is pervasive; and discord δίκη, and that beings [our being] quite naturally come-into-being through discord

b) One should be aware that polemos pervades; with discord δίκη, and that all beings are begotten because of discord.

[38] Correctly understood, a δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

In addition, Polemos was originally the δαίμων of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect.

It is interesting to observe how the term δαίμων - with and after Plato, and especially by its use by the early Christian Church - came to be a moral abstraction, used in a bad sense (as 'demon'), and contrasted with another moral abstraction, that of 'angels'. Indeed, this process - this change - with this particular term is a reasonable metaphor for what we may call the manufacture and development of abstractions, and in which development the ontology and theology of an organized monotheistic religion played a not insignificant part.

[39] Agamemnon, 174-183. qv. *Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way* in *The Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

[40] Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6

[41] qv. *The Nature of Being and of Beings* in *The Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

[42] The numinous is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις - that is, what continues or maintains or manifests ἁρμονίη and thus καλλός; the natural balance - sans abstractions - that enables us to know and appreciate, and which uncovers, Φύσις

---

## Appendix I

### The Principle of Δίκη

Δίκη is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of ὕβρις and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote -

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν  
μαθεῖν ἐπιτρέπει

The goddess, Judgement, favours someone learning from adversity.

Agamemnon, 250-251

In respect of Δίκη, I write - spell - it thus in this modern way with a capital Δ to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what may have been the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη does not mean nor imply something theological, but rather implies the natural balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning - σωφρονεῖν - that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις - between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

That is, when ἔρις (discord) is or becomes δίκη - as suggested by Heraclitus in Fragment 80 -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

---

## Appendix II

### From Mythoi To Empathy A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceiviation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceiviation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

"the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used then it is a specific and extended type of

συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

"is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

### **A New Appreciation Of The Numinous**

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in Appendix VII - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion*,

"One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way. Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculine, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2103. Appendix VII - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Qv. Appendix VII - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality, with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

---

### Appendix III

#### Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελοῦσα: παθῶν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic representation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονίη and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or

lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς καὶ ἀγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

---

## Appendix IV

### The Concept Of Physis

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and ἱερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [2], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [3]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [4].



Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [5] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [6]

Physis is also personified in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate:

"The divine is all of that mexion: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis  
For Physis is presented in the divine." [7]

### **The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos**

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [9] and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings.

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological.

### *Notes*

[1] I have included here, as Appendix IV, my translation of, and notes on, the relevant part of 1015α.

[2] See Appendix IV, below, and also my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[3] πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[4] See Appendix V.

[5] Poemandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[6] Poemandres 16-18.

[7] Ιερός Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, 2015.

[9] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-

thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[10] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[11] Refer, for example, to my *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness in The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2012.

[12] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

---

## Appendix V

### Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015a

#### Text

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

#### Translation

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

#### Commentary And Notes

*physis*. φύσις. A transliteration, since (i) this is a fundamental philosophical principle/term that requires contextual interpretation, and (ii) the English words 'nature' and Nature not only do not adequately describe this principle but also lead to and have led to certain misunderstandings of Aristotle in particular and of classical Greek culture in general.

*quidditas*. οὐσία. Quidditas - post-classical Latin, from whence the English word 'quiddity' - is more appropriate here than 'essence', given the metaphysical (ontological) context and given that 'essence' now has so many non-philosophical connotations. An interesting alternative would be the scholastic term haecceity. As with physis, quidditas is a philosophical term which requires contextual interpretation.

*changement inherent*. The expression ἀρχὴν κινήσεως is crucial to understanding what Aristotle means in respect of physis. In regard to κίνησις, since Aristotle here does not mean 'motion' or 'movement' in the sense of Newtonian physics (with its causal concepts of force, mass, velocity, kinetic energy), and since such physical movement is what the English words 'motion' and 'movement' now most usually denote, then alternatives must be found. Hence the translation 'changement'.

For what Aristotle is describing here is 'change', as for example in the natural development, the unfolding, the growth, of some-thing living that occurs because it is living; because it is possessed of Life and which Life is the ἀρχή of the changement, the 'original being' (the φύσις) from whence being-becomes to be often perceived and classified by us in orderly ways.

What is described is an a-causal change, of being-becoming - of being unfolding - and thus fulfilling the potentiality of being within it. Hence why here Aristotle writes ἀρχὴν κινήσεως, which describes the

potential change inherent in certain beings. <sup>1</sup> That is, the a-causal origin of beings-becoming, or having become, and which beings (having changed, developed, unfolded) we then perceive and classify in orderly ways <sup>2</sup>, such as by shape or usefulness to us, or by a notion such as causality: in terms of physical- 'movement'. Which is why, in Aristotle, there is a relation between φύσις, μορφή, and εἶδος - εἶδος in the sense of 'perceivability' and not, as in Plato, denoting an abstract 'form' or an 'ideal' - διὸ καὶ ὅσα φύσει ἔστιν ἢ γίγνεται, ἤδη ὑπάρχοντος ἐξ οὗ πέφυκε γίγνεσθαι ἢ εἶναι, οὕτω φαμέν τὴν φύσιν ἔχειν ἂν μὴ ἔχη τὸ εἶδος καὶ τὴν μορφήν.

Thus φύσις is what is a-causal in beings and which acausality is the origin of the 'natural' order that unfolds because of the potentiality of being to become, to presence in the causal, whence to be perceived by us in various orderly arrangements and/or arranged in terms of usefulness, and which arrangements/usefulness include τὸ καλόν - and thus schemata, τάξις <sup>3</sup> - and ἀρετή.

*substantia*. ὕλη. I have chosen to use the etymon of the English word 'substance' - qv. *substantia* in Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae* - to again (i) emphasize the need for contextual interpretation in respect of a specific philosophical term, and (ii) to avoid whatever misunderstandings may arise from the modern (non-ontological) connotations of words such as 'matter' and 'substance'.

*as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it.* καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. The sense of γένεσις here implies a 'coming-into-being' rather than just 'generation', just as φύω implies a being 'burgeoning' - unfolding, revealing itself (its physis) - rather than just 'growing'.

*the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.* The Greek word ἐντελεχεία is compounded from ἐν ελεῖ ἔχει and the sense here - in relation to ἐνυπάρχουσα - seems to be twofold: of a being as an unchanged being, and of what a being has become (or is becoming) as a result of a change, for both types of being actually exist, are real. One exists as a being as it is and has remained, and one exists as the being it has become (or is in the process of becoming) through the potential for change inherent within it. Thus, for Aristotle, physis denotes the being of both types of being.

ooo

[1] In respect of ἀρχὴ as implying what is primarily inherent, qv. 1012b-1013a.

[2] As Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Sciendum est autem, quod principium et causa licet sint idem subiecto, differunt tamen ratione. Nam hoc nomen principium ordinem quemdam importat; hoc vero nomen causa, importat influxum quemdam ad esse causati." *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, liber 5, lectio 1, n 3.

[3] Regarding 1078a, τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἶδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὠρισμένον (the most noticeable expressions of kalos are schemata and harmony and consonancy), my view - given the context - is that τάξις here is best translated as "schemata", rather than "order" or "arrangement" both of which are vague, open to mis-interpretation, and unrelated to the context, which context is mathematical beauty. Similarly, ὁρίζω (to me) suggests consonancy, echoing as that (now somewhat obscure) English word does both by its use by, among others, Shakespeare (Hamlet, Act 2, Scene 2, 286) and also by its relation to the almost 'mathematical beauty' of some music (as evident for example in the counterpoint of JS Bach).

Furthermore, just because the Greek has συμμετρία it does not necessarily follow that the English word 'symmetry' is an appropriate translation, considering how the word symmetry is now used and has been used, in the West for many centuries, and especially in relation to art (in terms, for example, of objects and the human body).

Given that Aristotle in 1078a is referring to geometry in particular and mathematics in general, then an appropriate translation is 'harmony' - as in "a collation of representative signs or marks, so arranged that they exhibit their agreement and account for their discrepancies or errors." A harmony, in other words, that is most evident (as I mentioned in my essay) in Euclid's Elements, as schemata and consonancy are therein evident, most of the contents (theorems) of which book - deriving from people such as Pythagoras - were known to Aristotle.

Thus, a translation such as "the chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness" can in my opinion lead to projecting onto Aristotle what he may not necessarily have meant; and projecting onto in respect of how we now, over two thousand years after Aristotle, understand and use such common English terms. Hence, also, why I sometimes use obscure English words (which may suggest a relevant meaning) or transliterations (as in physis).

---

## Appendix VI

### Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1

#### Text

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται

#### Translation

My translation of the fragment is:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done.

#### Comments

##### 1. λόγος

In respect of fragments 80 and 112 I have suggested that it is incorrect to interpret πόλεμος simplistically as 'war', strife, or kampf <sup>[1]</sup> and that, instead of using such words, it should be transliterated so as to name a distinct philosophical principle that requires interpretation and explanation with particular reference to Hellenic culture and philosophy. For, more often than not, such common English words as 'war' are now understood in a non-Hellenic, non-philosophical, context and explained in relation to some ideated opposite; and in the particular case of the term 'war', for example, in contrast to some-thing named, explained, or defined, as 'peace' or a state of non-belligerence.

In respect of fragment 1 <sup>[2]</sup>, does λόγος suggest a philosophical principle and therefore should it, like πόλεμος, be transliterated and thus be considered as a basic principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or weltanschauung, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess? Or does λόγος, as I suggested in respect of fragment 112 and 123 <sup>[3]</sup> imply:

both a *naming* (denoting), and a *telling* – not a telling as in some abstract explanation or theory, but as in a simple describing, or recounting, of what has been so denoted or so named. Which is why, in fragment 39, Heraclitus writes:

ἐν Πριήνῃ Βίας ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω, οὗ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν ἄλλων <sup>[4]</sup>

and why, in respect of λέγειν, Hesiod wrote:

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,  
ἴδμεν δ' , εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι <sup>[5]</sup>

I contend that fragment 1 also suggests a denoting, in the sense of expressing some-thing by denoting it or describing it by a 'name'. That is, that λόγος here does not refer here to what has often be termed Logos, and that the 'ambiguous' αἰεὶ <sup>[6]</sup> is not really ambiguous at all.

For one has to, in my view, take account of the fact that there is poetry in Heraclitus; a rather underrated style that sometimes led others to incorrectly describe him as ὁ σκοτεινός, the ambiguous (or the obtuse)

one, and led Aristotle to write:

τὰ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτου διαστίξαι ἔργον διὰ τὸ ἄδηλον  
εἶναι ποτέρῳ πρόσκειται, τῷ ὕστερον ἢ τῷ πρότερον, οἷον ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ αὐτῇ τοῦ συγγράμματος:  
φησὶ γὰρ "τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι ἄνθρωποι γίνονται":  
ἄδηλον γὰρ τὸ ἀεὶ, πρὸς ποτέρῳ δεῖ διαστίξαι. [6]

It is the poetic style of Heraclitus that I have tried, however badly, to express in my often non-literal and rather idiosyncratic translations/interpretations of some of the fragments attributed to him. Hence my interpretation of the first part:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists – human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it.

The 'which I explain' being implicit in the sense of λόγος here as a naming and expression by a particular individual, contrasted (as often with Heraclitus) rather poetically with a generality; in this instance, contrasted with human beings - 'men' - in general.

## 2. ἀεὶ

In my view, "tend to" captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves.

## 3. διαιρέων and Φύσις

I take the sense of διαιρέων here somewhat poetically to suggest not the ordinary 'divide' but the more expressive 'cleave', with it being undivided Physis that is cleaved into parts by "such naming and expression" as Heraclitus has revealed. That is, Heraclitus is not saying that he has described or expressed each thing 'in accordance with its true nature' (or divided things correctly, or something of the kind) but rather that the process of naming and categorization is or has divided Physis, obscuring the true nature of Being and beings, and it is this process, this obscuring, or concealment. of Physis - of cleaving it into separate parts or each thing, 'each' contrasted with a generality <sup>[7]</sup> - that he has revealed and is mentioning here, as he mentioned it in fragment 123:

Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

Concealment accompanies Physis <sup>[8]</sup>

Which is why I have transliterated Φύσις as referring to a general philosophical principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or weltanschauung, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess.

## 4. πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων

In respect of ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, the Homeric usage <sup>[9]</sup> is, for me, interesting as it implies a proverbial kind of saying rather than just 'words' and 'deeds':

Τηλέμαχ', οὐδ' ὄπιθεν κακὸς ἔσσεαι οὐδ' ἀνοήμων,  
εἰ δὴ τοι σοῦ πατρὸς ἐνέστακται μένος ἡύ,  
οἷος κεῖνος ἔην τελέσαι ἔργον τε ἔπος τε:

Telemachus – you will not be unlucky nor lacking in resolution  
If you hereafter instill into yourself the determination of your father  
Whose nature was to accomplish those deeds he said he would.

Furthermore, I take the sense here of πειρώμενοι poetically to suggest a "fumbling about" - as the inexperienced often fumble about and experiment until, often by trial and error, they have gained

sufficient experience to understand and know what they are doing and what is involved, which rather reminds one of a saying of Pindar <sup>[10]</sup>:

γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπείροισιν, ἐμπείρων δέ τις  
ταρβεῖ προσιόντα νιν καρδίᾳ περισσῶ

## 5. ἐγερθέντες and εὐδοντες

Given that, as mentioned above, there is poetry in Heraclitus, I am inclined to avoid the literal, and usual, understanding of ἐγερθέντες and εὐδοντες, particularly given the foregoing πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων which renders such a literal understanding not only out of context and disjointed but decidedly odd. Human beings forgetting things when they sleep? If, however, and for example, ἐγείρω here poetically suggests alertness, an interest or excitement - as ἤγειρεν in the Agamemnon suggests an alertness and excitement, an interest in what has occurred, and thence the kindling of a pyre <sup>[11]</sup> - then there is, as often in Heraclitus, a flowing eloquence and that lack of discordance one might expect of an aphorism remembered and recorded long after the demise of its author.

## Notes

[1] qv. *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, and *Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80*

As mentioned in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

"In addition, Polemos was originally the δαίμων [not the god] of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect."

[2] qv. Sextus Empiricus: *Advenus Mathematicos* VII. 132

[3] Regarding 123 - Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - qv. *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*, e-text 2010

[4] "In Priene was born someone named and recalled as most worthy - Bias, that son of Teutamias."

[5]

We have many ways to conceal - to name - certain things  
And the skill when we wish to expose their meaning

[6] Aristotle: *Ars Rhetorica* Book 3, chapter 5 [1407b]

[7] As in Homer et al, for example Iliad, Book VII, 215 -

Τρῶας δὲ τρόμος αἰνὸς ὑπήλυθε γυῖα ἕκαστον

But over the Trojans, a strange fear, to shake the limbs of each one there

[8] qv. my *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change* [Notes on Heraclitus fragment 123], e-text 2010

[9] Odyssey, Book II, 272

[10] Fragment 110

[11] Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 296-299

σθένουσα λαμπὰς δ' οὐδέπω μαυρουμένη,

ὑπερθοροῦσα πεδίον Ἀσωποῦ, δίκην  
φαιδρᾶς σελήνης, πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας  
ἤγειρεν ἄλλην ἐκδοχὴν πομποῦ πυρός.

The torch, vigorous and far from extinguished,  
Bounded over the Asopian plain  
To the rocks of Cithaeron as bright as the moon  
So that the one waiting there to begin that fire, jumped up

Note that here the watchman is not awakened from sleep.

---

## Appendix VII

### Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations

#### Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

#### Acausal

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of ψυχή.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal

or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

## ἀρετή

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

## Aristotelian Essentials

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties - that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first *Rules of Reasoning* which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world - the phenomenal world - by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

## ἁρμονία

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

## Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means benignity, which word derives from the Latin benignitatem, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ ii. 483 ] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from com, meaning together-with, combined with pati, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin passiō. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are compassivity and benignity.

## Cosmic Perspective

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our



abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us – or can incline us – toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

## **δαίμων**

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

## **Denotatum**

The term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

## **Descriptor**

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

## **δίκη**

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκην of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκᾱ - spelt thus in a modern way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκᾱ from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκᾱ thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

## **Empathy**

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin sympathia, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning enduring/suffering, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature, the ontology (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

## **Enantiodromia**

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.

An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

## **ἔρις**

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἢ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

## **Extremism**

By extreme is meant to be harsh, so that an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of

hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

## εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour...  
[My translation]

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

## Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin honorem (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise  
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,  
So that Achilles underfongeth  
As to a yong ladi belongeth  
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. History of the Life of Henry the Second. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

## Humility

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

## **Ideation**

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

## **Immediacy-of-the-Moment**

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

## **Innocence**

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

## **Masculous**

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence /competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin masculus and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schiboleth."

*True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise.*  
Edinbvrgh, 1633

## **Muliebral**

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

## **Numinous**

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

See Appendix II - From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous - for more details.

## **Pathei-Mathos**

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

## **Politics**

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

## **Πόλεμος**

Heraclitus fragment 80

Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around

rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

## **Physis (φύσις)**

See Appendix IV: The Concept Of Physis.

## **Religion**

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

## **Separation-of-Otherness**

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἁρμονίη, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

## **Society**

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

## **σωφρονεῖν**

I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

## **State**

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land

(and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority /representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

## **The Good**

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

## **Time**

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the φύσις - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

## **ὑβρις**

ὑβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement - σωφρονεῖν - and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and πάθει μάθος.

Hubris upsets the natural balance - is contrary to ἁρμονίη [harmony] - and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, ὑβρις disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαίμόνων and those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαίμόνων.

## **Way**

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

## Wisdom

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, σωφρονεῖν, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: rerum divinarum et humanarum. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὕβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἀρμονίη.

## Wu-wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

## ψυχή

Life qua being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, φύσις, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

---

## Appendix VIII

### Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition

#### The Numinous And Denotata

The intuition, the personal experiencing, of the numinous is in my fallible opinion of fundamental importance in understanding our physis (φύσις) as human beings and our relation to Being, the source of beings, sentient or otherwise.

As I noted in my 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* [1], the term numinous derives from the classical Latin numen and denotes "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

It thus has a wider meaning than that ascribed to it by Rudolf Otto in his *Das Heilige*. For him, it was manifest in the written words - 'the revelation' - of the Old and New Testaments of Christianity (qv. *Das Heilige*, chapters X, XI) as well as in Christian exegesis manifest in the preaching of individuals such as Martin Luther (*Das Heilige*, chapter XII) and in religious terms it involved 'worship' (*Das Heilige*, chapter XIII ff) and in philosophical terms was described by Kant's a priori (*Das Heilige*, chapter XVII). Yet Otto also wrote that it was sui generis, a personal emotion or feeling.

The wider meaning of the numinous results from our faculty of empathy which provides or can provide an



individual intuition - a wordless-knowing or awareness - of the numinous, and as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, [2] or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεός, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi.

For such extrapolation by the very nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris, a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus poetically and somewhat enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσιν, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λαμβάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλαμβάνονται. [3]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [4]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [5]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [6]

80 [62] Orig. c. Cels. VI 42 p. 111, 11 *εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών?].*

Thus δίκη is the natural balance of conflicting opposites and thus an ancestral way of reconciliation or of resolving conflict, often misunderstood as a 'unity of opposites' with a dialectic of opposites with its inherent causality thus mistakenly considered a means to understanding, development and a believed in concept of necessary change.

The notion of discord so being born by denotata sundering physis is also and perhaps better expressed by Anaximander who like Heraclitus has been much misunderstood:

ἐξ ὧν δὲ ἡ γένεσις ἐστὶ τοῖς οὖσι, καὶ τὴν φθορὰν εἰς ταῦτα γίνεσθαι κατὰ τὸ χρεών· διδόναι γὰρ αὐτὰ δίκην καὶ τίσιν ἀλλήλοις τῆς ἀδικίας κατὰ τὴν τοῦ χρόνου τάξιν [7]

Where beings have their origin there also they cease to exist: offering payment to balance, one to another, their unbalance for such is the arrangement of what is passing. [8]

Which expresses the causality inherent in the beings - existents, ἰδέα/εἶδος - that denotata brings-into-being. They are unbalanced, and since they are causal entities will sooner or later pass away even though in their living through the thoughts and actions of mortals they usually manifest and bring-into-being discord: hence why Heraclitus wrote εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν.

This is in contrast to the individual wordless-knowing that empathy brings-into-being, and explains the fundamental flaw of Plato's ἔλεγχος which led for example to him having Protagoras saying that the poet Simonides does not speak 'correctly', οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγει [9] even though poetry could possibly be - as an intimation of the numinous - an attempt to wordfully presence what causal abstractions conceal, with the attempt by Socrates to dispute such an assertion by Protagoras seeming to fail. [10]

Which is perhaps why Aristotle (Metaphysics, 982β) quoted a saying attributed to Simonides: θεός ἄν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας which follows ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι,

It is hard to be a purely noble person [...] a god alone has that privilege [11]

With the context of Aristotle's quotation his statement, ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἡ σοφία περί τινος ἀρχὰς καὶ αἰτίας ἐστὶν ἐπιστήμη, δῆλον. Metaphysics, 982α

It is evident that sapientia is a knowing of axioms and of sources [12]

and because

ἀλλ' οὔτε τὸ θεῖον φθονερὸν ἐνδέχεται εἶναι, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, οὔτε τῆς τοιαύτης ἄλλην χρὴ νομίζειν τιμιωτέραν. ἡ γὰρ θειοτάτη καὶ τιμιωτάτη: τοιαύτη δὲ διχῶς ἂν εἴη μόνη: ἦν τε γὰρ μάλιστ' ἂν ὁ θεὸς ἔχοι, θεία τῶν ἐπιστημῶν ἐστί, καὶ εἴ τις τῶν θείων εἴη. Metaphysics, 983α

it is not possible for the divine to be envious; indeed, as the maxim goes: songsters make many a false claim; nor should any other [epistēmê] be considered the more honourable, for it is divine because honourable in just two ways: if epistēmê is of the divinity or of the divine. [13]

Which returns us to whether some poetry such as the lyric attributed to Simonides as preserved by Plato can, for we mortals, be an intimation of the numinous, as some music - such as the counterpoint of JS Bach - is believed by many musicians and others to be.

If we presume to substitute 'the numinous' for 'the divine' and for 'the divinity' (the theos) then an epistēmê is τίμιος - honourable, precious, worthy, prized - if it is of, if it presences, the numinous; and it is interesting to note that, well over a thousand years after Aristotle, τίμιος in the Greek Orthodox tradition implies 'holy' as in Τίμιος Σταυρός, the Holy Cross.

In addition, as Aristotle - citing an ancient maxim - writes: παροιμίαν πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἄοιδοί, 'songsters make many a false claim', and that because of both the nature of denotata and our physis as human beings.

### **Empathy, The Hermetic Tradition, And Our Human Physis**

The reality of empathy in relation to the numinous is two-fold - jumelle, as is our physis as human beings according to the Corpus Hermeticism - because although a means to appreciate, to discover, to feel, to know, the numinous without the need for mythoi, denotata and the associated exegesis, dialectic and discord, it is unappreciated, underdeveloped.

° Empathy is unappreciated, because of our physis: as is explained using Greek mythoi and in terms of the mystic hermetic tradition, in the Poemander tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

"distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to wyrd. Hence, although over the harmonious structure, when within become the slave. Male-and-female since of a male-and-female father, and wakeful since of a wakeful one [...] This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day." [14]

This is further explained, again using Greek mythoi and in terms of the hermetic tradition, in tractate XI, which returns us to Aristotelian honour and takes us to where σοφία - qv. the quotation from Metaphysics, 982α above - is personified and explained as manifesting the noble, the beautiful, good fortune (εὐδαιμονία), arête, and Aion:

"The foundation of all being is theos; of their quidditas, Aion; of their substance, Kosmos. The craft of theos: Aion; the work of Aion: Kosmos, which is not just a coming-into-being but always is, from Aion. Thus it cannot be destroyed since Aion is not destroyable nor will Kosmos cease to be since Aion surrounds it.

But the Sophia of theos is what?

The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. From Aion to Kosmos: exemption from death, and continuance of substance.

For that geniture depends on Aion just as Aion does on theos. Geniture and Kronos - in the heavens and on Earth - are jumelle; in the heavens, unchanging and undecaying; yet on Earth, changeable and decayable.

Theos is the psyche of Aion; Aion that of Kosmos; the heavens that of the Earth. Theos is presenced in perceivration, with perceivration presenced in psyche, and psyche in substance, with all of this through Aion, with the whole body, in which are all the bodies, replete with psyche with psyche replete with perceivration and with theos. Above in the heavens the identity is unchanged while on Earth there is changement coming-into-being

Aion maintains this, through necessitas or through foreseeing or through physis, or through whatever other assumption we assume, for all this is the activity of theos. For the activity of theos is an unsurpassable crafting that no one can liken to anything mortal or divine [...]

Observe also the septenary cosmos ordered in arrangement by Aion with its separate aeonic orbits.

Everything replete with phaos but with no Fire anywhere. For fellowship, and the melding of opposites and the dissimilar, produced phaos shining forth in the activity of theos, progenitor of all that is honourable, archon and hegemon of the septenary cosmos." [15]

The essence of which, beyond mythoi, is (i) that our physis is both "male-and-female since of a male-and-female father" and (ii) that the numinous can be apprehended, presenced, by and through "the noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête and Aion," with Aion understood as the eikon (εἰκὼν) of the Kosmos [16] and - qv. Tractate XI, 2-4 - the cause of changement coming-into-being on Earth and thus of what is changeable and decayable and thus dies.

Which changement coming-into-being, and its change and eventual decay applies, in the perspective of Aeons - of millennia - to denotata and what existents, such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions, denotata has brought-into-being.

° Empathy is underdeveloped because it seems that for millennia we mortals - or more specifically, perhaps a majority of the males of our species - have neglected the reality of our physis being jumelle: both male-and-female, both masculous and muliebral, with such muliebral physis the geneture of empathy. [18] As described in terms of Greek mythoi and the hermetic tradition in the Pœmandres Tractate in relation to the seven spheres:

"Those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivration; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivration; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion.

Now listen to the rest of the explanation you asked to hear. When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral. Directly, then, theos spoke a numinous logos: propagate by propagation and spawn by spawning, all you creations and artiselements, and let the perceiver have the knowledge of being deathless and of Eros as responsible for death.

Having so spoken, foreknowing - through wyrd and that harmonious structure - produced the coagulations and founded the generations with all beings spawning according to their kind. And they of self-knowledge attained a particular benefit while they who, misled by Eros, love the body, roamed around in the dark, to thus, perceptively, be afflicted by death." [19]

The masculous is evident in patriarchy, in patriarchal religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam; in denotata, in dialectical confrontation including Plato's ἑλεγχος, as well as evident in the desire, the masculous need, for competition and for armed and personal conflict. The muliebral is evident in personal virtues such as honour, benignitas, empathy, and wordless personal methodologies such as the epistêmê that is mystical contemplation.

The neglect of empathy is understandable since the masculous - as manifest for example in patriarchy, patriarchal religions, and denotata, codified as denotata has been in the ἰδέα and ideal of Empires and nation-States - has dominated mortal life for millennia to the detriment of the muliebral.

### **The Uncertitude Of Knowing**

Empathy, with its personal horizon, is or can be the geneture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings, while the masculous is the geneture of that certitude of individual knowing that infuses codified

denotata such as ideologies and organized hierarchical religions.

Thus, in terms of numinosity, empathy presents or can present to us in the immediacy of the personal moment an individual intimation or wordless knowing of the numinous, which intimation or knowing places our mortal life, and all we connect with it or is connected to it, into a supra-personal perspective which is a-causal and of Being itself, the source of beings and all being; of which Being we as a mortal are one finite deathful emanation. Which perspective brings with it or can bring with it the wordless knowing of the unwisdom of words.

Thus, while some mythoi Greek or otherwise, some mystical traditions ancient or otherwise, some poetry and some metaphysical speculations Greek or otherwise, can or may provide some insights into our physis, their wordfull expression or expressions are subject or have been subjected to exegesis, just as written expressions of religious-type revelations always are; with such exegesis more often than not the geniture of a certitude or certitudes of knowing.

Which returns us to the personal wordless knowing of empathy and its discoverable embedded uncertainty of knowing, with personal virtues such as honour and benignitas one means - an ancient epistêmê - to try to live according to such a wordless knowing, with personal honour a melding, a hermetic ἐναντιοδρομία, of masculous and muliebral thus returning us to the physis that was cleaved asunder and which in others is still being cleaved asunder.

According to an ancient saying attributed to Heraclitus which may contain a fallible intimation of this and possibly was one of first written intimations of it:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7)

All by geniture is appropriately apportioned with beings bound together again by enantiodromia.

ooo

[1] The text is included as Appendix II.

[2] The terms ἰδέα/εἶδος refer to Plato's postulation of what has been termed 'forms' - of a type of metaphysical existent such as an 'idea' - with ἰδέα used for both singular and plural instances, and εἶδος (singular) often used by Plato instead, as for instance at Phaedo 103ε, ὥστε μὴ μόνον αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος ἀξιοῦσθαι τοῦ αὐτοῦ ὀνόματος εἰς τὸν αἰὲν χρόνον.

In regard to the use of εἶδος and the postulation, cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1078β, 14-15, συνέβη δ' ἡ περὶ τῶν εἰδῶν δόξα τοῖς εἰποῦσι διὰ τὸ πεισθῆναι περὶ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῖς Ἡρακλειτείοις λόγοις ὥς πάντων τῶν αἰσθητῶν αἰὲν ῥεόντων, ὥστ' εἴπερ ἐπιστήμη τινὸς ἔσται καὶ φρόνησις, ἑτέρας δεῖν τινὰς φύσεις εἶναι παρὰ τὰς αἰσθητὰς μενούσας: οὐ γὰρ εἶναι τῶν ῥεόντων ἐπιστήμην.

[3] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[4] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[5] Fragment B80.

[6] I have transliterated πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη because both πόλεμος and δίκη should be regarded, like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation. To render them blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical, since δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary/ancestral way, and so on.

[7] Diels-Kranz, 12A9, B1

[8] In respect of χρόνος, it is not here a modern abstract measurable 'time' but 'the passing' of living or events as evident in the Agamemnon:

ποίου χρόνου δὲ καὶ πεπόρθηται πόλις 278

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

τίς δὲ πλὴν θεῶν ἅπαντ' ἀπήμων τὸν δι' αἰῶνος χρόνον 554-5

Who - except for the gods - passes their entire life without any injury at all?

In respect of ἀδικία, here it simply implies unbalance in contrast to the balance that is δίκη. The translation 'disorder' - like 'order' for δίκη - is too redolent of some modern or ancient morality designed to manifest 'order' in contrast to its dialectical opposite 'disorder'.

[9] Protagoras, 339δ

[10] Relevant quotations from Simonides are at 339β, 339ξ and the poem by Simonides that Plato preserved is, in the version by J. Aars, *Das Gedicht des Simonides in Platons Protagoras*, 1888,

Ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι χαλεπὸν,  
χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον.  
<...>  
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον νέμεται,  
καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰρημένον: χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.  
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας: ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,  
ὃν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ καθέλη.  
πράξας μὲν εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,  
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς <τις>,  
καὶ τὸ πλεῖστον ἄριστοι, τούς κε θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.  
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι δυνατὸν  
διζήμενος κενεὰν ἐς ἄπρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,  
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός:  
ἐπὶ δ' ὕμιν εὐρὼν ἀπαγγελέω.  
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,  
ἐκὼν ὅστις ἔρδη  
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν: ἀνάγκη δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.  
<...>  
<οὐκ εἰμ' ἐγὼ φιλόμωμος> ἐξαρκεῖ γ' ἐμοί,  
ὃς ἂν ἦ κακὸς μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰδώς γ' ὄνησίπολιν δίκαν,  
ὕγιης ἀνὴρ, οὐδὲ μὴ μιν ἐγὼ  
μωμήσομαι: τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων  
ἀπείρων γενέθλα:  
πάντα τοι καλά, τοῖσί τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται.

The more recent arrangement and reconstruction cited as PMG 242 is somewhat different:

ἄνδρ' ἀγαθὸν μὲν ἀλαθέως γενέσθαι  
χαλεπὸν χερσὶν τε καὶ ποσὶ καὶ νόῳ  
τετράγωνον, ἄνευ ψόγου τετυγμένον·  
<...>  
οὐδέ μοι ἐμμελέως τὸ Πιττάκειον  
νέμεται, καίτοι σοφοῦ παρὰ φωτὸς εἰ-  
ρημένον· χαλεπὸν φάτ' ἐσθλὸν ἔμμεναι.  
θεὸς ἂν μόνος τοῦτ' ἔχοι γέρας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ  
ἔστι μὴ οὐ κακὸν ἔμμεναι,  
ὃν ἂν ἀμήχανος συμφορὰ καθέλη·  
πράξας μὲν γὰρ εὖ πᾶς ἀνὴρ ἀγαθός,  
κακὸς δ' εἰ κακῶς [  
[ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δὲ καὶ ἄριστοὶ εἰσιν  
[οὓς ἂν οἱ θεοὶ φιλῶσιν.]  
τοῦνεκεν οὐ ποτ' ἐγὼ τὸ μὴ γενέσθαι  
δυνατὸν διζήμενος κενεὰν ἐς ἄ-

πρακτον ἐλπίδα μοῖραν αἰῶνος βαλέω,  
πανάμωμον ἄνθρωπον, εὐρυεδοῦς ὅσοι  
καρπὸν αἰνύμεθα χθονός·  
ἐπὶ θ' ὑμῖν εὐρῶν ἀπαγγελέω.  
πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,  
ἐκῶν ὅστις ἔρδη  
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν: ἀνάγκαι  
δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.

<...>

[οὐκ εἰμὶ φιλόσοφος, ἐπεὶ ἔμοιγ' ἐξαρκεῖ  
ὃς ἂν μὴ κακὸς ᾖ] μηδ' ἄγαν ἀπάλαμνος, εἰ-  
δώς γ' ὀνησίπολιν δίκαν,  
ὕγιής ἀνὴρ: οὐ τμήντ' ἐγὼ  
μωμήσομαι· τῶν γὰρ ἡλιθίων  
ἀπείρων γενέθλα.  
πάντα τοι καλὰ, τοῖσιν  
τ' αἰσχρὰ μὴ μέμικται

DL Page, Poetae Melici Graeci, Cambridge University Press, 1962

Such a reconstruction introduces the question of exegesis of not only texts but of such elements as grammar and how the personal revealing that is the wordless-knowing of empathy compares to the supra-personal wordful revealing that can be or has been deduced from written texts, spoken words or methods such as Plato's ἔλεγχος.

[11] Socrates, in Protagoras, does not associate ἀληθής with ἀγαθός but with χαλεπός, which again introduces the question as to whether ἔλεγχος is a guide to the revealing that is ἀλήθεια and thus to understanding our φύσις as human beings.

[12] In respect of αἵτιος, here the term 'sources' is apt since 'cause' can impose a particular interpretation on the text, as in the causality of 'cause and effect'.

In respect of σοφία, the Latin sapientia is apposite, as in my translation of Tractates I and XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum [ Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369] because in some contexts the English word 'wisdom' does not fully reflect the meaning (and the various shades) of σοφία, especially in a metaphysical context given what the English term 'wisdom' now, in common usage and otherwise, often denotes. As in Tractates I and XIII sapientia requires contextual - a philosophical - interpretation.

[13] Regarding my translation:

i) ἐπιστήμη: epistêmê - implying skill or experience, especially in a profession or type of work or in using a methodology - rather than 'science' or 'knowledge', since 'science' has too many modern connotations while 'knowledge' is somewhat vague. In respect of experience in general, qv. Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus, 1115: τῇ δ' ἐπιστήμη σύ μου προύχοις τάχ' ἂν που, "about this, your experience has the advantage over mine".

ii) αἰδός: songsters, not poets, qv. Hesiod, Theogony, 95 where it is associated with the Muses and Apollo:

ἐκ γάρ τοι Μουσέων καὶ ἐκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος  
ἄνδρες αἰδοὶ ἔασιν ἐπὶ χθόνα καὶ κιθαρισταί

iii) [epistêmê] is implied from the previous ἄνδρα δ' οὐκ ἄξιον μὴ οὐ ζητεῖν τὴν καθ' αὐτὸν ἐπιστήμην.

iv) Honourable is an accepted translation of τίμιος, with the English word honour dating from around 1200 and derived from the Latin honorem (refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. An early use of the term occurs in a poem in Middle English by John Gower dating from c. 1393 which references the Greek warrior Achilles:

And riht in such a maner wise  
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,  
So that Achilles underfongeth

As to a yong ladi belongeth  
Honour, servise and reverence.

Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 (The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901, edited by G.C Macaulay)

[14] Tractate I, 15-16. From my commentary on that tractate:

*jumelle*. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word *jumelle* - from the Latin *gemellus* - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here [...]

*deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal*. Θνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον. Here, in respect of my choice of English words, I must admit to being influenced by Chapman's lovely poetic translation of the Hymn to Venus from the Homeric Hymns:

That with a deathless goddess lay a deathful man

In respect of οὐσιώδης, I prefer, given the context, 'inner' - suggestive of 'real' - rather than the conventional 'essential'; although 'vital' is an alternative translation here, suggested by what Eusebius wrote (c.326 CE) about φῶς [*phaos*] pre-existing even before the cosmic order, with φῶς used by Eusebius to mean Light in the Christian sense:

τό τε φῶς τὸ προκόσμιον καὶ τὴν πρὸ αἰώνων νοερὰν καὶ οὐσιώδη σοφίαν τὸν τε ζῶντα  
[*Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book 1, chapter 2]

The Light of the proto-cosmos, the comprehension and vital wisdom existing before the Aeons

*wyrd*. For ἡ εἰμαρμένη. A much better choice, here, than either 'fate' or 'destiny' given how overused both those words now are and how their interpretation is also now so varied. An overview of how the concept may have been understood in the late Hellenic period (around the time the *Hermetica* was probably written) is given in the 2nd century CE discourse *De Fato*, attributed to Plutarch, which begins by stating that εἰμαρμένη has been described in two ways, as ἐνέργεια (vigorous activity) and as οὐσία (essence) - πρῶτον τοίνυν ἴσθι, ὅτι εἰμαρμένη διχῶς καὶ λέγεται καὶ νοεῖται: ἡ μὲν γάρ ἐστιν ἐνέργεια ἡ δ' οὐσία

[...]

*a mysterium esoteric*. For κεκρυμμένον μυστήριον. The term *mysterium* - a truth or insight or knowledge about some-thing, which is considered religious and/or metaphysical ('hermetic') and which is unknown/unrevealed to or as yet undiscovered by others, and hence 'mysterious' to them - expresses the meaning of the Greek here (as the word *mystery* by itself does not). Likewise in respect of *esoteric* - kept concealed or which is concealed/hidden to most or which is revealed to an individual by someone who already 'knows' what the *mysterium* in question is.

Hence why I write *a mysterium* here rather than *the mysterium*, and why "a *mysterium*, esoteric even to this day", is better than the rather bland "the *mystery* kept hidden until this very day".

[15] Tractate XI, 3-7

[16] In respect of *eikon*, as I wrote in my commentary on Tractate I (Pœmandres), 32:

"The meaning and significance of [εἰκὼν] are often overlooked and often lost in translation. I have transliterated εἰκὼν as here it does not only mean what the English words 'image' or 'likeness' suggest or imply, but rather it is similar to what Maximus of Constantinople in his *Mystagogia* [*Patrologiae Graeca*, 91, c.0658] explains. Which is of we humans, and the cosmos, and Nature, and psyche, as eikons, although according to Maximus it is the Christian church itself (as manifest and embodied in Jesus of Nazareth and the Apostles and their successors and in scripture) which, being the *eikon* of God, enables we humans to recognize this, recognize God, be in communion with God, return to God, and thus find and fulfil the meaning of our being, our existence.

According to the hermetic weltanschauung, as outlined by Pœmandres here, all physis - the being, nature, character, of beings - their essence beyond the form/appearance their being is or assumes or is perceived as - re-presents (manifests, is an eikon of) theos. That is, the physis of beings can be considered not only as an emanation of theos but as re-presenting his Being, his essence. To recognize this, to recognize theos, to be in communion with theos, to return to theos, and thus become immortal, there is the way up (anados) through the seven spheres."

[17] The masculous and the muliebral are outlined in Part Four of *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*.

[18] The unusual English word geniture expresses the essence of γένεσις: that which or those whom have or derive their being (and their subsequent development) from or because of something else or because of someone else. It also avoids comparisons with the Biblical use of the English 'genesis'.

[19] Tractate I, 18-19.

---

### Selected Bibliography

- ° Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos. 2017. ISBN 978-1979599023
- ° Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates. 2017. ISBN 978-1976452369
- ° Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos. 2013. ISBN 978-1484097984
- ° Sarigthersa. 2015. ISBN 978-1512137149
- ° Tu Es Diaboli Ianua. 2017. ISBN 978-1982010935

---

**cc David Myatt 2022**  
(Seventh Edition)

All translations by David Myatt

This work is published under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 4.0 license  
and can be freely copied, distributed, and republished according to the terms of that license

---



**From Mythoi To Empathy  
Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous**

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivization, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivization, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

"the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance – our being as human beings – is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

"is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

### **A New Appreciation Of The Numinous**

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

David Myatt  
January 2018

[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in my 2013 text *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion*,

"One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way. Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculous, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2103. Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Myatt, *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. Appendix II - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality, with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

---

## A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the *Ἐρὸς Λόγος* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum* where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can  
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens  
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of theos;  
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change  
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπαθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονία, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the *Poemandres* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum* - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκη (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδομίας/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend* to captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ  
ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ  
σημαιομένου χρῆται.

David Myatt  
2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *ἱερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. 2015.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay is included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is included as an appendix to *Towards Understanding Physis*.

---

## Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

### Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos

≡ ≡ ≡

#### Précis

It is my contention that my personal 'numinous way of pathei-mathos', [1] or at least the foundations of that Way, which are personal empathy and pathei-mathos, could possibly be the basis for other individuals to develop their own numinous weltanschauung free from the influence of the manufactured impersonal causal abstractions that shaped the ancient world, some of which still influence the modern world, and the more recent impersonal causal abstractions which since the Second World War are prevalent and now authoritative in the modern world because supported by many if not most governments and Institutions in the Western world, and often now used by governments as the basis for criminal laws.

#### Defining Causal Abstractions

As described in the Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos, an abstraction is

"a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past." [1]

In philosophical terms, a causal abstraction is an ideation, an idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος), which is explained and/or defined by words and terms (denotata) and which invariably is used to form or describe a particular category of 'things'. [2] Thus a particular living tree is assigned to the category Oak, or a sub-category thereof, such as a Holm Oak, and which category is believed to be a means to 'know' and 'understand' that particular living being. Hence, that particular living tree is not considered to be an individual, separate, living entity with its own 'being' but is instead treated as one of a 'particular kind' and thus judged and treated according to what, at a particular time, is considered to be appropriate for the particular category it has been assigned to. This, in effect, is a stereotyping of a living, individual entity; and a stereotyping almost completely ignored in modern societies abrogating as those societies do certain ancestral, and world-wide, ancestral traditions where such a living entity was considered, even respected, as a living, individual entity; as for example in the ancient tradition in certain Britannic lands of venerating a particular Oak or a particular woodland.

In both ancient and modern times causal abstractions and the categories developed from them have been and are used to categorize human beings, as for example in regard to the supra-personal abstraction, the entity, termed 'the nation-State' where individual human beings and families are considered to be, or not to be, 'citizens' of that entity and often treated accordingly, with citizens having certain privileges and freedoms often denied to non-citizens.

More recently, causal abstractions and the categories developed from them have been deployed to describe individual human beings and their behaviour both personal and social. Thus, a human being categorized, and judged, by whomsoever for whatever reason, as 'depressive' is treated as the society of the time requires such a category to be treated, which is often by means of pharmaceutical medication and/or by a prescribed regime of therapy.

In another, perhaps more relevant example which I personally have some practical experience of, human beings are often categorized, and judged, by the political beliefs they publicly adhere to, or may be alleged to adhere to, at a particular time of their lives, especially if their political views do not align with, or contradict, the zeitgeist of the society of their time. Thus, in my own case, the judgement is "once a nazi always a nazi" and that such nazis should "never be forgiven" and treated according to whatever persecutorial and dehumanizing treatment the judgemental

ones deem such "nazis" deserve.

For such dehumanizing, or more precisely such hubriatic, impersonal, judgment and consequential treatment, is implicit in applying abstract, causal, abstractions to individual living beings, human and otherwise.

That this is not understood in the societies of our time, except by a few, is in my opinion somewhat indicative of how prevalent hubris still is among us.

Hence, despite our thousands of years old culture of pathei-mathos [3] we do not seem to have learned from what others tried to explain to us:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [4]

### **The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos**

The axioms are:

(i) That human beings possess a still mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain wordless knowledge concerning or awareness of the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings.

This type of knowing, this perception, is different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science [5], and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings.

ii) That πάθει μάθος, a personal learning from adversity, from difficult, or harsh, or life threatening experiences, provides us or can provide us, like empathy, with a particular wordless knowledge concerning, or an awareness of, the φύσις (physis) of ourselves, of other human beings and of other living beings.

Thus, according to the numinous way of pathei-mathos it is personal empathy and pathei-mathos which enable us to circumvent causal abstractions because what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [6]

For a weltanschauung such as the numinous way of pathei-mathos betakes us or can betake us as individuals beyond the acceptance of a supra-personal authority, and thus beyond the demand by some supra-personal authority that we individuals accept or have to accepted such a supra-personal authority, and which authority, in the Western world was described in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), as for example in his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; and with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio.

Modern nation-States have simply replaced God as the supreme authority with Prime Ministers, Presidents, and those who are described as elected "representatives of the people", or in case of some nation-States with some individual or individuals or some unelected representatives who or which have assumed authority by means such as a coup d'état or similar means, but all of whom expect the people they rule to obey whatever decisions or laws or diktats they make. Both types if necessary enforce their authority by means such as Courts of Law or through the use of civil or military organizations such as the Police and the armed forces, all of who or all of which accept and indeed are based upon a supra-personal chain-of-command with statutory laws made by some government (past and present) or imposed by some assumed authority regarded as necessary for what they deem to be the 'correct' functioning of society.

Furthermore, in practical terms a weltanschauung such as the numinous way of pathei-mathos

"means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our [human] history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are 'our' enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies." [7]

### **Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos**

Since the numinous way of pathei-mathos is based on personal empathy and personal pathei-mathos which develop an appreciation of the limitation, the infortunity, of words, and of the categories derived from them, and thus engenders in an individual a knowing of the limited nature of their understanding and of their fallibility, the numinous way of pathei-mathos is apolitical since politics is derived from and dependant on words, spoken and written, and on supra-personal often ideological categories as well as on supra-personal organizations or movements with a particular agenda or particular aims.

For an appreciation of the infortunity of words is a wordless-knowing, born of empathy and pathei-mathos, of the cycle of suffering; of how we humans continue to repeat the errors of the past caused as such errors often are by some suffering-causing causal abstractions championed by some supra-personal authority such as government or some President or Prime Minister or Caesar or Emperor or King or some tyrant or some religious potentate or preacher or political demagogue or political organization, urging us as individuals to go to war or partake in some invasion or crusade or armed conflict, or some campaign, or revolution, or whatever.

Thus it seems logical to suggest that if other individuals develop their own numinous weltanschauung it would be a personal and thus non-political one and, similar to the numinous way of pathei-mathos, involve a mystical living, a life-style choice, involving the individual and/or their partner or family if they have one; where the appellation 'mystical' suggests a personal intuitive insight about and a personal awareness of the nature of Reality, with Reality wordlessly known through their empathy and pathei-mathos.

There is also in the numinous way of pathei-mathos an appreciation of the fact that the nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris (ἔρις), and thus in a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲν ἄξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται. [8]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [9]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [10]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

In addition,

"the meaning of the appellations inherent in causal abstraction can and does change over periods causal time through common usage and through the changes of interpretation (exegesis) wrought through political ideology, social change, and religious dogma and reforms. The interpretation of an appellation, a denotatum, in another language can also vary or distort the original meaning, a classic example being Hellenistic Greek words, occurring the Corpus Hermeticum, such as λόγος and νοῦς conventionally interpreted as 'word' and 'intellect/mind' neither of which interpretations are satisfactory.

What is important about all this is that empathy and pathei-mathos are directly personal and wordless perceiverations and experiences and therefore are not dependant on denotata, on any ἰδέα/εἶδος, and by the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos cannot be extrapolated beyond such a personal experiencing." [11]



[1] <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathe-mathos-v7.pdf>

[2] Philosophically, 'a thing' is an entity which exists independently of another 'thing', and which is a particular object of human perception. It is also or can be distinguishable from the word or the idea which attempts to describe it; that is, it is the actual 'being' behind or beyond such a causal apprehension or appellation.

[3] The culture of pathei-mathos is the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as may be (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as may have (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) may be manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms such as certain films and documentaries.

This thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath; and also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos.

[4] Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218.

Notes on my translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal – 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) – rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[5] The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are:

- i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
- (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
- (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
- (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first Rules of Reasoning which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and aspects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials. Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

[6] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/dwm-some-metaphysical-questions-v5b.pdf>

[7] *Persecution And War*, 2018. [https://archive.org/download/persecution-and-war/Persecution\\_And\\_War.pdf](https://archive.org/download/persecution-and-war/Persecution_And_War.pdf)

[8] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[9] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[10] Fragment B80.

[11] *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf>



### Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos

One of the many subjects that I have pondered upon in the last few years is the role of education and whether a learning of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos – understood and appreciated as a distinct culture [1], and thence as an academic subject – could possibly aid us, as a species, to change; aid us to become more honourable, more compassionate, less egoistical, less violent, as individuals, and thus aid us to possibly avoid in our own lives those hubriatic errors, and causing the suffering, that the culture of pathei-mathos reveals are not only unethical but also which we humans make and cause and have made and caused again and again and again. That is, can a knowledge and appreciation of this culture, perhaps learnt individually and/or in institutions such as schools and colleges, provide with us with that empathic, supra-personal, perspective which I personally – as a result of my own learning and experiences – am inclined to feel could change, evolve, us not only as individuals but as a species?

#### Studia Humanitatis

For thousands of years – from the classical world to the Renaissance to fairly recent times – Studia Humanitatis (an appreciation and understanding of our φύσις as human beings) was considered to be the basis of a good, a sound, education.

Thus, for Cicero, Studia Humanitatis implied forming and shaping the manners, the character, and the knowledge, of young people through them acquiring an understanding of subjects such as philosophy, geometry, rhetoric, music, and *litterarum cognitio* (literary culture). This was because the classical weltanschauung was a paganus one: an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus) [2], as harmonious, as the unity itself:

Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quoi nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum – nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti. [3]

Furthermore, this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals.

In the Christian societies of Renaissance Europe, Studia Humanitatis became more limited, to subjects such as history, moral philosophy, poetry, certain classical authors, and Christian writes such as Augustine and Jerome, with the general intent being a self improvement with the important proviso that this concentration on the advancement of the individual to 'noble living' by means of 'noble examples' (classical and Christian) should not conflict with the Christian weltanschauung [4] and its perceivation of obedience to whatever interpretation of Christian faith and eschatology the individual favoured or believed in. In more recent times, Studia Humanitatis has become the academic study of 'the liberal arts', the 'humanities', often as a means to equip an individual with certain personal skills – such as the ability to communicate effectively and to rationally analyse problems – which might be professionally useful in later life.

However, the culture of pathei-mathos provides an addition to the aforementioned Studia Humanitatis, and an addition where the focus is not on a particular weltanschauung (paganus, Christian, liberal, or humanist) but rather on our shared pathei-mathos: on what we and others have learnt, and can learn, about our human φύσις from experience of grief, suffering, trauma, injustice. For it is such personal learning from experience, or the records of or the influence of the experiences of others, which is not only the essence of much of what we, and others for thousands of years, have appreciated and learned from some of the individual subjects or fields of learning that formed the basis for the aforementioned Studia Humanitatis – history, *litterarum cognitio*, and music, for example – but also what, at least in my view, provides us with perhaps the deepest, but most certainly with the most poignant, insight into our φύσις as human beings.

Thus considered as an individual subject or field of learning, academic or otherwise, the culture of pathei-mathos would most certainly help to form and shape the manners, the character, the knowledge, of young people, for it has the potential to provide us with a perception and an understanding of the supra-personal unity – the mundus – of which we are a mortal part, and thus perhaps can aid us to become as inwardly balanced, as harmonious, as the unity beyond and encompassing us, bringing as such a perception, understanding, and balance, does that appreciation and empathic intuition of others which is compassion and aiding as such compassion does the cessation of the suffering that an unbalanced – a hubriatic, egoistical – human φύσις causes and has caused for so many millennia.

Can we therefore, as described in the Pœmandres tractate,

hasten through the harmonious structure, offering up, in the first realm, that vigour which grows and which fades, and – in the second one – those dishonourable machinations, no longer functioning. In the third, that eagerness which deceives, no longer functioning; in the fourth, the arrogance of command, no longer insatiable; in the fifth, profane insolence and reckless haste; in the sixth, the bad inclinations occasioned by riches, no longer functioning; and in the seventh realm, the lies that lie in wait. [5]

For is not to so journey toward the unity "the noble goal of those who seek to acquire knowledge?"

But if we cannot make that or a similar personal journey; if we do not or cannot learn from our human culture of pathei-mathos, from the many thousands of years of such suffering as that culture documents and presents and remembers; if we no longer concern ourselves with *de studiis humanitatis ac litterarum*, then do we as a sentient species deserve to survive? For if we cannot so learn, cannot so change, cannot so educate ourselves, or are not so educated in such subjects, then it seems to me we may never be able to escape to the freedom and the natural evolution, the diversity, that await among the star-systems of our Galaxy. For what awaits us if we, the unlearned, stay unchanged, are only repetitions of the periodicity of human-caused suffering until such time as we exhaust, lay waste, make extinct, our cultures, our planet, and finally ourselves. And no other sentient life, elsewhere in the Cosmos, would mourn our demise.

David Myatt  
May 2014

From a letter sent to a personal correspondent. Some footnotes have been added, post scriptum, in an effort to elucidate some parts of the text and provide appropriate references.

### Notes

[1] I define *the culture of pathei-mathos* as the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries.

The culture of pathei-mathos thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath – but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos.

[2] A pedantic aside: it is my considered opinion that the English term 'balanced' (a natural completeness, a natural equilibrium) is often a better translation of the classical Latin *perfectus* than the commonly accepted translation of 'perfect', given what the English word 'perfect' now imputes (as in, for example, 'cannot be improved upon'), and given the association of the word 'perfect' with Christian theology and exegesis (as, for example, in suggesting a moral perfection).

[3] M. Tullius Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, Liber Secundus, xiii, xiv, 37

[4] q.v. Bruni d'Arezzo, *De Studiis et Litteris*. Leipzig, 1496.

[5] My translation of the Greek text. From *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei – A Translation and Commentary*. 2013. A pdf version is available here – [pymander-hermetica-pdf](#)

## Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions

The cosmogony described in the Ιερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum answers certain interesting and important metaphysical questions in a particular and ancient way:

Δόξα πάντων ὁ θεὸς καὶ θεῖον καὶ φύσις θεία. ἀρχὴ  
τῶν ὄντων ὁ θεός καὶ νοῦς καὶ φύσις καὶ ὕλη, σοφία εἰς  
δεῖξιν ἀπάντων ὧν· ἀρχὴ τὸ θεῖον καὶ φύσις καὶ ἐνέργεια  
καὶ ἀνάγκη καὶ τέλος καὶ ἀνανέωσις [...]

τὸ γὰρ θεῖον ἢ πᾶσα κοσμικὴ σύγκρασις φύσει ἀνανεου-  
μένη· ἐν γὰρ τῷ θεῷ καὶ ἡ φύσις κατέστηκεν

The numen of all beings is theos: numinal, and of numinal physis.

The origin of what exists is theos, who is Perceivation and Physis and Substance:

The sapientia which is a revealing of all beings.

For the numinal is the origin: physis, vigour, incumbency, accomplishment, renewance [...]

The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis

For Physis is presenced in the divine. <sup>(1)</sup>

All such 'theological' answers - from classical Greco-Roman paganism and mysticism to Gnosticism to Christianity and Islam - lead us to enquire (i) if Being - whether denoted by terms such as acausal, born-less, θεός The One, The Divine, God, The Eternal, Μονάς - can be apprehended (or defined) by some-things which are causal (denoted by terms such as spatial, temporal, renewance), and (ii) whether this 'acausal Being' is the origin or the genesis or 'the artisan' <sup>(2)</sup> or the creator of both causal being (including 'time', and 'change') and of causal living beings such as ourselves.

That is, (i) has causal spatially-existing being 'emerged from' - or been created by - acausal Being, and (ii) are causal beings - such as ourselves - an aspect or emanation of acausal Being?

My admittedly fallible understanding now, after some years of reflexion and based as it is on my limited knowledge, is that formulating such a question in such terms - causal/acausal; whole/parts; eternal/temporal; ipseity/unity; emergent from/genesis of - is a mis-apprehension of what-is because such denoting is 'us as observer' (i) positing, as Plato did, such things as a theory regarding 'the ideal' <sup>(3)</sup>, and/or (ii) constructing a form or abstraction (ἰδέα) which we then presume to project onto what is assumed to be 'external' to us,

both of which present us with only an illusion of understanding and meaning because implicit in such theories and in all such constructed forms are (i) an opposite (an 'other') and (ii) the potentiality for discord (dialectical or otherwise) between such opposites and/or because of a pursuit of what is regarded as 'the ideal' of some-thing. Hence, perhaps, why Heraclitus is reported to have written:

*εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα*

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [Fragment 80]

*πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα*

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia. [Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7]

In effect, our innate assumption of our existence as sentient individuals - separate from 'the other', be that other Being itself or other beings - leads us and has led us to formulate and to strive to answer certain metaphysical questions in a particular way. That is, from the position of an 'observer' whose answers are dependant on postulated concepts described or denoted by words such as 'time', 'change', God, theos/theoi, and 'the ideal'.

Is it therefore possible for us to discover our being, our physis - in effect, know Reality and discover the meaning of our existence - without such postulations, be they metaphysical or theological or otherwise? My fallible answer, based as it is on my limited knowledge and my own experience, is that it is possible; and possible by means of empathy and pathei-mathos. However, by necessity - given the personal (local) horizon of both empathy and pathei-mathos <sup>(4)</sup> - the knowing so revealed is (i) only our personal fallible answer, and also is (ii) always sans denotatum <sup>(5)</sup>, a wordless empathic knowing that cannot be expressed (by words, terms) without in some way distorting it or denuding it of such numinosity as has been personally discovered (revealed) by empathy and pathei-mathos.

For empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of

sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal. In this matter, Heraclitus perhaps had something interesting to say, again:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ  
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ  
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ  
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῦμαι κατὰ φύσιν  
διαίρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους  
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες  
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [Fragment 1]

What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith.

### **Plato, Art, and The Ideal**

Since art can wordlessly communicate to us the wisdom, and the knowing of Reality, revealed individually by both empathy and the culture of pathei-mathos, it seems apposite to briefly consider Plato's rather influential notions of τὸ καλόν (of beauty) and of 'the ideal'.

As Isocrates wrote of Helen of Troy:

κάλλους γὰρ πλεῖστον μέρος μετέσχευ, ὃ σεμνότατον καὶ τιμιώτατον  
καὶ θειότατον τῶν ὄντων ἐστίν.

Of all things valued, numinous, and divine, she had the greatest share: beauty.  
[Encomium, 54]

However, with Plato, τὸ καλόν becomes impersonal, even when the subject he is writing about is human 'nobility'. That is, it becomes something unrelated to what is personally known and proven (revealed) by what is real (as for example in the deeds of a real-life individual). For Plato, it is related to or manifests ἀρετή ('virtue'), which in his philosophy becomes a hypothesized abstraction which a person may or may not possess and which, it is claimed, can be 'brought into being' by other abstractions, such as a Republic.

Thus, in Phaedo (78b), Plato writes about αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν and about αὐτὸ ἕκαστον ὃ ἔστιν: that is, of 'abstract' (true, ideal) beauty and of 'abstract' (true, ideal) being. In Kratylus 389d he has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) - βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα.

Also in Kratylus (386d-386e), Plato has Socrates say:

μήτε ἐκάστω ἰδίᾳ ἕκαστον τῶν ὄντων ἐστὶν δῆλον δὴ ὅτι αὐτὰ αὐτῶν οὐσίαν ἔχοντά τινα βέβαιόν ἐστι τὰ πράγματα

Each being has their own mode [of being] which is constant, and which is neither caused by nor related to us.

Furthermore, he writes that:

πρῶτον μὲν αἰεὶ ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον, οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a)

Firstly, it always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay.

ἀρχόμενον ἀπὸ τῶνδε τῶν καλῶν ἐκείνου ἕνεκα τοῦ καλοῦ αἰεὶ ἐπανιέναι, ὥσπερ ἐπαναβασμοῖς χρώμενον (Symposium 211c)

Starting from that beauty, that person must - because of such beauty - always as by a ladder move on, upwards.

While many other examples could be adduced, it does seem evident that Plato posits some abstraction - whether described by him in terms such as ἰδέα, εἶδος, or involving αὐτὸ (i.e. form, ideal, 'true'/of itself) - and which abstraction, because it has no genesis, does not die, does not grow, and yet which invokes change - a moving-on by, or discord resulting from, the pursuit of such an ideal by individuals - is independent of and often damaging to our living (and thus numinous) reality as individual diverse human beings possessed of the faculty of



empathy and able to learn from the culture of pathei-mathos.

In contrast, when Aristotle, in an oblique reference to Plato, writes τοῦ δὲ καλοῦ μέγιστα εἶδη τάξις καὶ συμμετρία καὶ τὸ ὠρισμένον <sup>(6)</sup> he is referring to what is real, what actually exists - ὥστε διὰ τοῦτο ὀρθῶς οἱ γεωμέτραι λέγουσι καὶ περὶ ὄντων διαλέγονται καὶ ὄντα ἐστίν: διττὸν γὰρ τὸ ὄν. That is, to the beauty of geometry as manifest, for example, by geometricians when - as in Euclid's Elements - they make logical deductions from schemata and harmony and consonancy. Aristotle goes on to write that τὸ καλόν is especially revealed (δείκνυμι) in mathematics: ἃ μάλιστα δεικνύουσιν αἱ μαθηματικαὶ ἐπιστήμαι.

Also, when Aristotle deals with ἀρετή he considers it a μέσον (meson, median, a balance between 'being' (actually existing) and 'not-being' (a potentiality), qv. Metaphysics 9.1051a) and thus discards Plato's εἶδος of an abstractive 'good' and 'bad'. Which discarding was an excellent philosophical beginning given how Plato's abstractive 'ideal' of some-thing with its implication that a person "must - because of that ideal - always as by a ladder be moving on, upwards," is and has been the genesis of discord and suffering.

Empathy and pathei-mathos, however, emphasize the importance of living in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment", sans the pursuit of some ideal or of some assumed perfection; with what is 'good' being not some abstraction denoted by some faith, dogma, ideal, ideology, or by some collocation of words, but rather is a function of, a wordless revealing by, our personal, our individual, empathic horizon, by our pathei-mathos, and by the collected human pathei-mathos of millennia manifest as that is in the culture of pathei-mathos. Which revealing is that what-lives is more important than any ideal, than any abstraction or form, with 'the good' simply being that which does not cause suffering to, or which can alleviate the suffering of, what-lives, human and otherwise.

Thus the 'meaning' of our physis, of our living, so revealed, is just that of a certain way of living; a non-defined, non-definable, very personal way of living, only relevant to us as an individual where we - appreciating our human culture of pathei-mathos, and thus appreciative of art, music, literature, and other emanations of the numinous - incline toward not causing suffering and incline (by means of empathy, compassion, and honour) toward alleviating such suffering as we may personally encounter in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment".

David Myatt  
March 2015  
(Revised JD2457094.73)

The genesis of this essay was some correspondence, in February and March 2015, with an

academic, and which correspondence concerned certain metaphysical questions. I have paraphrased parts of, or utilized quotations from, or rewritten certain passages from, several of my replies. All translations (and errors) are mine.

## Notes

(1) Myatt, David, *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos*. 2015. ISBN 978-1507660126.

(2) In respect of theos as artisan (δημιουργόν) qv. the Corpus Hermeticum; for example Poemandres 11.

(3) qv. *Plato, Art, and The Ideal*, below.

(4) The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about.

For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding.

(5) Denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used here in accord with its general meaning, which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

(6) *Metaphysics*, Book 13, 1078a. "The most noticeable expressions of kalos are schemata and harmony and consonancy."

---

## Musings On Suffering, Human Nature, and The Culture of Pathei-Mathos

This is an extract from a written reply, in September 2013, to a personal correspondent. It has been revised for publication here, with some footnotes added in an effort to elucidate some parts of the text.

ooo

In respect of the question whether I am optimistic about our future as a species, I vacillate between optimism and pessimism, knowing as I - and so many - do from experience that the world contains people who do good things [1], people who do bad things, and people who when influenced or led or swayed by some-thing or someone can veer either way; and given that it seems as if in each generation there are those - many - who have not learned or who cannot learn from the pathei-mathos of previous generations, from our collective human πάθει μάθος that has brought-into-being a culture of pathei-mathos thousands of years old. Historically - prior to, during after the time of Cicero, and over a thousand years later during and after the European Renaissance - this culture was evident in *Studia Humanitatis*, and is now presenced in works inspired by or recollecting personal pathei-mathos and described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; in particular works of literature, poetry, and drama; in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

This culture of pathei-mathos reveals to us the beauty, the numinosity, of personal love; the numinosity of humility, and compassion; and the tragic lamentable unnecessary suffering caused by hubris, dishonour, selfishness, inconsiderance, intolerance, prejudice, hatred, war, extremism, and ideologies [2]. A world-wide suffering so evident, today, for example in the treatment of and the violence (by men) toward women; in the continuing armed conflicts - regional and local, over some-thing - that displace tens of thousands of people and cause destruction, injury, and hundreds of thousands of deaths; and evident also in the killing of innocent people [3] by those who adhere to a harsh interpretation of some religion or some political ideology.

Do good people, world-wide, outweigh bad ones? My experiences and travels incline me to believe they may do, although it seems as if the damage the bad ones do, the suffering they cause, sometimes and for a while outweighs the good that others do. But does the good done, in societies world-wide, now outweigh the bad done, especially such large-scale suffering as is caused by despots, corruption, armed conflict, and repressive regimes? Probably, at least in some societies. And yet even in such societies where, for example, education is widespread, there always seem to be selfish, dishonourable, inconsiderate, people; and also people such as the extremist I was with my hubriatic certitude-of-knowing inciting or causing hatred and violence and intolerance and glorifying war and *kampf* and trying to justify killing in the name of some abstraction or some belief or some cause or some ideology. People mostly, it seems, immune to and/or intolerant of the learning of the culture of pathei-mathos; a learning available to us in literature, music, Art, memoirs, in the aural and written recollections of those who endured or who witnessed hatred, violence, intolerance, conflict, war, and killing, and a learning also available in the spiritual message of those who taught humility, goodness, love, and tolerance. Immune or intolerant people who apparently can only change - or who could only possibly change for the better - only when they themselves are afflicted by such vicissitudes, such personal misfortune and suffering, as is the genesis of their own pathei-mathos.

Thus, and for example, in Europe there is the specific pathei-mathos that the First and the Second World Wars wrought. A collective learning regarding the destruction, the suffering, the brutality, the horror, of wars where wakeful machines and mass manufactured weapons played a significant role.

All this, while sad, is perhaps the result of our basic human nature; for we are *jumelle*, and not only because we are "deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal" [4] but also because it seems to me that what is good and bad resides in us all [5], nascent or alive or as part of our personal past, and that it is just so easy, so tempting, so enjoyable, sometimes, to indulge in, to do, what is bad, and often harder for us to do what is right. Furthermore, we do seem to have a tendency - or perhaps a need - to ascribe what is bad to being 'out there', in something abstract or in others while neglecting or not perceiving our own faults and mistakes and while asserting or believing that we, and those similar to us or who we are in agreement with, are right and thus have the 'correct', the righteous, answers. Thus it is often easier to find what is bad 'out there' rather than within ourselves; easier to hate than to love, especially as a hatred of impersonal others sometimes affords us a reassuring sense of identity and a sense of being 'better' than those others.

Will it therefore require another thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years - or more or less millennia - before we human beings en masse, world-wide, are empathic, tolerant, kind, and honourable? Is such a basic change in our nature even possible? Certainly there are some - and not only ideologues of one kind or another - who would argue and who have argued that such a change is not desirable. And is such a change in our nature contingent, as I incline to believe, upon the fair allocation of world resources and solving problems such as hunger and poverty and preventing preventable diseases? Furthermore, how can or could or should such a basic change be brought about - through an organized religion or religions, or through individual governments and their laws and their social and political and economic and educational policies, or through a collocation of governments, world-wide; or through individuals reforming themselves and personally educating others by means of, for example, the common culture of pathei-mathos which all humans share and which all human societies have contributed to for thousands of years? Which leads us on to questions regarding dogma, faith, and dissent; and to questions regarding government and compulsion and

'crime and punishment' and whether or not 'the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'; and also to questions regarding the efficacy of the reforming, spiritual, personal way given that spiritual ways teaching love, tolerance, humility, and compassion - and virtuous as they are, and alleviating and preventing suffering as they surely have - have not after several thousand years effected such a change in humans en masse.

I have to admit that I have no definitive or satisfactory answers to all these, and similar, questions; although my own pathei-mathos - and my lamentable four-decade long experience as an extremist, an ideologue, and as a selfish opinionated inconsiderate person - incline me to prefer the reforming, spiritual, personal way since I feel that such an approach, involving as it does a personal study of, a personal transmission of, the culture of pathei-mathos - and a personal knowing and a living of the humility that the culture of pathei-mathos teaches - is a way that does not cause nor contribute to the suffering that still so blights this world. A personal preference for such a numinous way even though I am aware of three things: of my past propensity to be wrong and thus of the necessary fallible nature of my answers; of the limited nature and thus the long time-scale (of many millennia) that such a way implies; and that it is possible, albeit improbable except in Science Fiction, that good people of honourable intentions may some day find a non-suffering-causing way by which governments or society or perhaps some new form of governance may in some manner bring about that change, en masse, in our human nature required to evolve us into individuals of empathy, compassion, and honour, who thus have something akin to a 'prime directive' to guide them in their dealings with those who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves.

Were I to daydream about some future time when such a galactic 'prime directive' exists, directing we spacefaring humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of non-terrans who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, then I would be inclined to speculate that unless we by then have fundamentally and irretrievably changed ourselves for the better then it would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it. For that is what we have done, among ourselves, for thousands of years; making then breaking some treaty or other; making some excuse to plunder resources; having some legal institution change some existing law or make some new law to give us the 'right' to do what it is we want to do; or manufacture some new legislative or governing body in order to 'legalize' what we do or have already done. Always using a plethora of words - and, latterly, legalese - to persuade others, and often ourselves, that what we do or are about to do or have already done is justified, justifiable, necessary, or right.

Perhaps the future excuse to so interfere contrary to a prime directive would be the familiar one of 'our security'; perhaps it would be an economic one of needing to exploit 'their' resources; perhaps it would be one regarding the threat of 'terrorism'; perhaps it would be the ancient human one, hallowed by so much blood, of 'our' assumed superiority, of 'their system' being 'repressive' or 'undemocratic' or of they - those 'others' - being 'backward' or 'uncivilized' and in need of being enlightened and 're-educated' by our 'progressive' ideas. Or, more probable, it would be some new standard or some new fashionable political or social or even religious dogma by which we commend ourselves on our progress and which we use, consciously or otherwise, to judge others by.

The current reality is that even if we had or soon established a terran 'prime directive' directing we humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of other humans here on Earth who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, it is fairly certain it "would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it..."

Which mention of a terran 'prime directive' leads to two of the other questions which cause me to vacillate between optimism and pessimism in regard to our future as a species. The question of increasing population, and the question of the finite resources of this Earth. Which suggests to me, as some others, that - especially as the majority of people now live in urban areas - a noble option is for us, as a species, to cooperate and betake ourselves to colonize our Moon, then Mars, and seek to develop such technology as would take us beyond our Solar System. For if we do not do this then the result would most probably be, at some future time, increasing conflict over land and resources, mass migrations (probably resulting in more conflict) and such governments or authorities as then exist forced by economic circumstance to adopt policies to reduce or limit their own population. Global problems probably exasperated still further by the detrimental changes that available evidence indicates could possibly result from what has been termed 'climate change' [6].

But is the beginning of this noble option of space colonization viable in the near future? Possibly not, given that the few countries that have the resources, the space expertise and the technology necessary - and the means to develop existing space technology - do not consider such exploration and colonization as a priority, existing as they seem to do in a world where nation-States still compete for influence and power and where conflict - armed, deadly, and otherwise - is still regarded as a viable solution to problems.

Which leads we human beings, with our jumelle character, confined to this small planet we call Earth, possibly continuing as we have, for millennia, continued: a quarrelsome species, often engaged (like primates) in minor territorial disputes; in our majority unempathic; often inconsiderate, often prejudiced (even though we like to believe otherwise); often inclined to place our self-interest and our pleasure first; often prone to being manipulated or to manipulating others; often addicted to the slyness of words spoken and written and heard and read; often believing 'we' are better than 'them'; and fighting, raping, hating, killing, invading here, interfering there. And beset by the problems wrought by increasing population, by dwindling resources, by mass migrations, by continuing armed conflicts (regional, local, supranational, over some-thing) and possibly also affected by the effects of climate change.

Yet also, sometimes despite ourselves, we are beings capable of - and have shown over millennia - compassion, kindness, gentleness, tolerance, love, fairness, reason, and a valourous self-sacrifice that is and has been inspirational.

But perhaps above all we have, in our majority, exuded and kept and replenished the virtue of hope; hoping, dreaming, of better times, a better future, sometime, somewhere - and not, as it happens, for ourselves but for our children and their children and the future generations yet to be born. And it is this hope that changes us, and has changed us, for the better, as our human culture of pathei-mathos so eloquently, so numinously, and so tragically, reveals.

Thus the question seems to be whether we still have hope enough, dreams enough, nobility enough, and can find some way to change ourselves, to thus bring a better - a more fairer, more just, more compassionate - future into-being without causing or contributing to the suffering which so blights, and which has so blighted, our existence on Earth.

Personally, I am inclined to wonder if the way we need - the hope, the dream, we need - is that of setting forth to explore and colonize our Moon, then Mars, and then the worlds beyond our Solar System, guided by a prime directive.

ooo

## Notes

[1] I understand 'the good' as what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. Honour being here, and elsewhere in my recent writings, understood as the instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

[2] I have expanded, a little, on what I mean by 'the culture of pathei-mathos' in my tract *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*.

[3] As defined by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I understand innocence as "an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do. Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence."

[4] Pœmandres (Corpus Hermeticum), 15 - διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος

As I noted in my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tract, "Jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle - from the Latin gemellus - describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

[5] qv. Sophocles, Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρωπου δεινότερον πέλει...  
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being...  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts - he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[6] Many people have a view about 'climate change' - for or against - for a variety of reasons. My own view is that the scientific evidence available at the moment seems to indicate that there is a change resulting from human activity and that this change could possibly be detrimental, in certain ways, to us and to the other life with which we share this planet. The expressions 'seems to indicate' and 'could possibly be' are necessary given that this view of mine might need to be, and should be, reassessed if and when new evidence or facts become available.

---

## Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴ δ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218 [1]

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονία (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θεοῦ σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [2]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [3]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κάγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

David Myatt  
January 2018  
(Revised March 2018)

[1] My translation. Some notes on the translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness. In this work, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of the ancestral tradition of ancient Greece, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals.

Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' - as the name of the goddess - is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[2] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[3] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda, XXVI. This is also a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

---

## Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One

### Causal Time and Living Beings

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the φύσις of beings [1], and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being and representing how a living being can change or may change or has changed, which such change being a-causal [2].

Thus, Time – as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked hours, days, weeks, and years – is regarded as an abstraction [3], and an abstraction which attempts to interpret living beings as functions of or as limited to a linear cause-and-effect described by separated moments progressing from a past to a present and thence to some future 'time'. Such conventional measured causal time may therefore be said to contribute to the concealment of the nature of living beings.

This conventional idea of time can be conveniently described as linear or causal-time, and considered as aptly represented by the term duration, a term which is a better translation of the Greek χρόνος than the English word 'time', as for example in Oedipus Tyrannus vv. 73-75:

καί μ' ἤμαρ ἤδη ξυμμετρούμενον χρόνῳ  
λυπεῖ τί πράσσει: τοῦ γὰρ εἰκότος πέρα  
ἄπεστι πλείῳ τοῦ καθήκοντος χρόνου

But I have already measured the duration  
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected  
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.

Such causal-time is the time of sciences such as physics and astronomy, with the universe, for instance, considered to be an entity 'expanding' as such expansion is measured by fixed linear points termed past, present, and future. Similarly, space itself is construed as a causal, dimensional, space-time manifold [4]. Thus and conventionally, to understand matter/energy is to 'know' (to observe or to theorize) how causal entities – such as elementary particles, or physical objects such as planets and stars – move and change and relate to each other (and other matter/energy in terms of composition and interactions) in this posited space-time manifold. There is thus a sense of physical order; a hierarchy of sub-atomic » atomic » 'classical mechanics' » gravitational » cosmological, with events occurring in the causal sequence past-present-future, and with interactions described in terms of certain fundamental physical forces, be such descriptions based on 'string theory', quantum theory [5], relativity theory, classical mechanics, or some theory which attempts to unify current descriptions of the aforementioned causal hierarchy.

This causal time is a quantity; a measurement of the observed or the assumed/posited/predicted movement of 'things' according to a given and a fixed pre-determined scale, and which measurement and fixed scale allows comparisons to be made regarding the movement or 'change' in position of 'things'.

While this understanding of time, and of space, has provided a useful understanding of the external world and aided the construction of machines and the development of a modern technology – and thus enabled humans to set foot on the Moon and send spacecraft to photograph the planets in our solar system – it is nonetheless limited in respect of revealing and understanding the φύσις of beings and thus the relation between living beings.

### The Error of Causality As Applied to Living Beings

The understanding of Time as a manifestation of the φύσις of beings is derived from the acausal knowing that empathy provides [6]; and a knowing that allows us to make a philosophical distinction, in respect of Time, between an observed or posited movement and 'a change'; with the former – movement – applicable to observed or posited physical things and the latter – change – to living beings. For example 'change' describes how a tree – a living organism – grows and which change includes, but is not limited to, the measured movement (in causal time and causal space) of its branches and its trunk as measured in fixed units such as girth and height and the position and size of branches in relation to other branches and nearby objects. Such change – of a living being – is an effluvium, a fluxion [7].

That is, living beings possess or manifest a type of Time – a species of change, manifest as a fluxion – that is different from the movement (the time) of things and thus different from the time used in sciences such as physics.

Furthermore, there is not only a distinction between a living being and a thing, but also the distinction regarding the assumed separation of beings. As a finite emanation (or presencing) of ψυχή, a living being is not, according to its φύσις, a separate being; as such, it cannot be 'known' – its nature cannot be understood – by external causal observations or by 'measuring'/describing it (in terms of 'space') in relation to other living beings or to 'things' and/or by using such observations/observational-classifications/measurements/descriptions to formulate a theory to characterize a 'type' (or genus or species) that such a living being is regarded as belonging to. For its φύσις is manifest – known – by its acausal relation to other living beings and by the acausal interconnectivity of such beings. Such a knowing is numinous; that is, an awareness of living (and often dependant) connexions and of the unity of Life beyond the finite, mortal, emanation we, as an individual human being, are.

In personal terms, the error of applying causal time, and the perception derived therefrom, to living beings is most evident in causal abstractions, and in what we may refer to as the dialectic of egoism: of ourselves as one distinct, self-



interested, human being contrasted with (or needing to be contrasted with) and often opposed to (or needing to be opposed to or seen to be opposed to) other humans. Thus, for millennia we have manufactured causal abstractions and identified with one or more of them, sought to bring them into being; as we have opposed other abstractions and especially those humans who identify with some abstraction or whom we have assigned to some abstraction, such as some group or some faith or some nation or some ethnicity or some ideology regarded as 'inferior' to 'ours' or as 'bad' compared to 'ours'. Similarly, we humans have for millennia often felt compelled to place our own self-interest, our welfare, before that of other humans – and before the welfare of Nature [8] – just as we have been often compelled and often are still compelled to strive, competitively or otherwise, against other humans in order to establish or reaffirm our personal identity, our difference from them (or their 'inferiority' compared to us). Thus has there been, and thus is there, hubris and suffering. Thus has there been, and thus is there, a lack of appreciation of the numinous and a lack of understanding of our φύσις and that of the φύσις of the other living beings (including other humans) who share this planet with us.

In summary, applying causal time to living beings creates and maintains division and divisiveness; while the perception of acausal time brings an appreciation of the numinous and thus a knowing of the inherent unity behind our ordinary understanding of separate living beings.

David Myatt  
November 2012

### Notes

[1] While it is convenient to understand φύσις simply as the 'nature' of a being, the term, as used in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, implies a revealing of not only the true 'nature' of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being.

[2] In respect of the acausal, refer to my text [Toward Understanding the Acausal](#) (2011).

Furthermore, it is useful to make a distinction, in terminology, between living beings/existents and non-living beings/existents. Thus, a 'thing' is used to describe matter or objects (natural or constructed) which do not possess the quality termed life, and which life is possessed by organisms. Currently, we observe or assume life by the following seven attributes: a living organism respire; it moves or can move without any external force being applied as cause of such movement; it grows or changes; it excretes waste; it is sensitive to, or aware of, its environment; it can reproduce itself, and it can nourish itself.

ψυχή is 'Life qua being', with our own being (as a human) understood as a mortal emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις, as human beings. ψυχή is also how we can begin to apprehend Being and how we relate to Being.

[3] An abstraction is defined, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, as:

"A manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed. Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris." [Vocabulary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos](#) (2012)

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our *self* and *the others*. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἀρμονίη, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

[4] Current exotic theories – such as 'string theory' (including M-theory) – are still based on an ideation of space-time that involves a causal-only time (time as a measurable and a separate quantity).

'String' theories posit not only transformations of a non-zero 'string' or strings in a causal space-time instead of a 'zero-

dimensional point' (or points) as in a classical three-dimensional Lorentz transformation or a four-dimensional Riemannian space, but also in possible manifolds whose dimensions are  $> 4$  (as in a Hilbert space). Also, while they do not describe space-time as a Riemannian manifold (as general relativity does), such theories posit manifolds or structures – such as H-flux and topological 'branes' – which, and whose changes, are described by or come to be described by mathematical equations which involve a causal time – a measured or measurable movement – in relation to other properties (such as extension/space), be those other properties mathematical (as in a topology) or physical (as in a metric, Riemannian or otherwise). Thus, in perturbation theory and in order to consider possible experimental results of the theory, a space-time is posited consisting of a four-dimensional extended Minkowski space combined with a compact Riemannian manifold; and as in M-theory where an 11-dimensional Minkowski space has been assumed with the extra seven dimensions being 'compactified' or compactable.

All such theories are currently 'exotic' because they have not yet [as of 2012] led to any unique predictions that could be experimentally verified.

[5] Like 'string theory' and cosmological theories (such as general relativity) quantum mechanics is based on a posited causal space-time. Therefore, a quantum theory cannot be used to describe the  $\phi\upsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$  of living beings or acausality.

[6] In respect of acausal knowing, see 'The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy' in [The Way of Pathei Mathos: A Philosophical Compendium](#).

[7] The use of the term *fluxion* dates from the sixteenth century (ce) with the term describing a change that occurs naturally and also one that arises from or because of itself (an effluvium). A description used by John Davies in his 1616 (ce) work *Mirum in Modum*: "If the fluxion of this instant Now Effect not That, noight wil that Time doth know."

As used here, fluxion describes how a particular living being not only changes/develops/manifests (that is, in an acausal manner) but also the fact of its (acausal) relation to other living beings and to Being.

[8] Nature is here understood as 'the creative force' that is the genesis of, and which maintains the balance of, the life which inhabits the Earth, and which life includes ourselves. This 'creative force' (or manifestation/presencing of  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ ) can be and often has been understood as a particular type of living being, as 'Nature' personified.

---

## The Natural Balance of Honour

The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are – together – a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχὴ – of Life, of our φύσις [1] – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν [2] and in accord with δίκη. [3]

This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack.

David Myatt  
2012

Extract from *The Numinous Balance of Honour in The Way of Pathei-Mathos – A Philosophical Compendiary*. 2012

ooo

### Appendix: Some Definitions

It would perhaps be useful to give definitions of some of the terms used since such definitions (and etymologies, if applicable) might help to avoid confusion and mis-understandings in respect of my use of those terms.

#### Compassion

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and in its original sense (the sense meant in my writings) the word means *benignity* [4]. Hence, by compassion is meant being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure, and thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

#### Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin *honorem* (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) *onor/onur*. By the term honour I mean an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus refined: that is, they are noble and hence distinguished by virtue of their character, which is one of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise  
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,  
So that Achilles underfongeth  
As to a yong ladi belongeth  
Honour, servise and reverence. [5]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds." [6]

## Empathy

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German *Einfühlung*, derives, via the late Latin *sympathia*, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπαθής - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning *enduring/suffering*, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

In my writings, empathy - *ἐμπάθεια* - is used to describe a particular and natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', it is a specific and extended type of *συμπάθεια*. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

## Wu-Wei

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous.

ooo

## *Notes*

[1] In respect of φύσις, see my brief essay *Toward Understanding Physis*.

[2] I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of Greek terms such as πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[3] Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on. The sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (*Odyssey*, III, 244).

[4] The word benignity derives from the Latin *benignitatem* and the sense imputed by the word is of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. It came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ii. 483] written around 1374 CE.

[5] John Gower, *Confessio Amantis*. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. *The Works of John Gower*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

[6] George Lyttelton. *History of the Life of Henry the Second*. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

---

### Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis

Given that we human beings are a sentient species, an interesting question is whether we have, over the past three thousand years, fundamentally changed. Changed in physis sufficient to enable us to avoid what our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos informs us is unwise. For example, around 700 BCE Hesiod wrote:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴ δ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [1]

Certainly, in the many intervening centuries, some individuals - from adversity, or otherwise - have learned to avoid hubris and be fair, as is evident in our ever-growing human culture of pathei-mathos. But have we as a species, en masse, learned anything physis-changing - and learned by ourselves or by virtue of being instructed or educated - from the likes of Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Herodotus, Thucydides, Aristotle, Pliny, and Cicero; from the Rig-Veda; from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama and Lao Tzu; from the gospel narratives of the life and crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth; from the music of JS Bach; from the art of Botticelli, Hokusai, and van Gogh; from the literature of the likes of Jane Austen, Solzhenitsyn, and Mariama Bâ; from the thousands and thousands and thousands of armed conflicts, wars, and invasions, of the past three thousand years; from the individual stories of suffering - of rape, torture, murder, starvation, theft, humiliation - traumatically recounted year after year, decade following decade, and century after century?

If we human beings - we mortals - have in sufficient numbers so learned and so changed, is that change qualifiable? My own, admittedly fallible, view is that it is qualifiable; with my tentative suggestion - the conclusion of some years considering the matter - being that it is by how we as individuals perceive, how we understand, and how we humans as a result of such a new perceiviation externally manifest (in terms of, for example, our societies, our attitudes, and our laws) the muliebral virtues and thus the position of women and gender roles in general. Qualifiable in this way because - at least according to my own learning, and my understanding of the culture of pathei-mathos - of our nexible physis.

For our physis - our being, as mortals, and thus our character as individuals - is not only subject to enantiodromia:

"[to] the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated - or has been incorrectly perceived as separated - returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about," {2}

but also, as I have mentioned elsewhere, because my thesis is that

"it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculous talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculous talking-mammals have - thousand year following thousand year - caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise." {3}

Considered in such qualifiable terms, there do appear to be some promising signs: for it does seem that several modern societies are - via more and more individuals acquiring a new perceiviation and thence a new understanding - slowly moving toward that equality between men and women, that rejection of stereotypical gender roles, and that recognition of the importance - of the necessity - of the muliebral virtues; which, combined, manifest an enantiodromiacal change in our human physis and which change, which balancing of the masculous with the muliebral, consequently could evolve us beyond the patriarchal ethos, and the masculous societies, which have been such a feature of human life on this planet for the past three thousand years, genesis as that ethos and those societies have been of so much grieving.

Which leads to interesting questions, to which I admit I have no answers. Questions such as whether we can, en masse, so change, and whether - if we can so change or are so slowly changing - it will take us another three thousand years, or more, or less, to live, world-wide, in societies where fairness, peace, and compassion, are the norm because the males of our species - perhaps by heeding Fairness and not obliging Hubris, perhaps by learning from our shared human culture of pathei-mathos - have personally, individually, balanced within themselves the masculous with the

muliebral and thus, because of sympatheia, follow the path of honour. Which balancing would naturally seem to require a certain conscious intent.

What, therefore, is our intent, as individual human beings, and can our human culture of pathei-mathos offer us some answers, or perchance some guidance? As an old epigram so well-expressed it:

θνητοῖσιν ἀνωίστων πολέων περ οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται νόου ἀνθρώποισι

"Of all the things that mortals fail to understand, the most incomprehensible is human intent." {4}

Personally, I do believe that our human culture of pathei-mathos - rooted as it is in our ancient past, enriched as it has been over thousands of years by each new generation, and informing as it does of what is wise and what is unwise - can offer us both some guidance and some answers.

David Myatt  
September 2014

## Notes

1. Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218. My translation. Some notes on the translation:

- a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and - importantly - of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In this work, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' - as the name of the goddess - is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.
- b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).
- c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.
- d. νήπιος. Literal - 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) - rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

2. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2013.

3. *Some Questions For DWM*, 2014.

4. Vitae Homeri, Epigrammata V. My (poetic, non-literal) translation.

ooo

Further Reading

[Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos](#)

---

## Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years. Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective. For the *pathei-mathos* which such literature - and often the associated *mythoi* - can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase *καλὸς κάγαθός*. That is, in the melding of *τὸ καλόν* (the beautiful) and *τὸ ἀγαθόν* (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι; Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.

But the Sophia of the theos is what? The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, *arête*, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, *τὸ καλόν* refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty - the beautiful - but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὐειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider "a classical education" - the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle - a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis. That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον, τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

David Myatt  
December 2019

Extract from a letter to an Oxfordian friend, with footnotes post scriptum

[1] <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos - ὁ θεός - is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek *mythoi*) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεός is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

ooo

All translations by DWM

---





## Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way

### Background

What I term The Numinous Way, as a philosophy and as a way of life, was not the result of a few or many moments of inspiration striking close together in causal Time as measured by a terran-calendar and thus separated from each other by days, weeks, or even a few years.

Rather, it resulted from some nine years of reflexions, intuitions, and experiences, beginning in 2002 when - for quite a few months - I wandered as a vagabond in the hills and fells of Westmorland and lived in a tent, and during which time I communicated some of my musings, by means of handwritten letters, to a lady living in Oxford whom I had first met well over a decade before.

These musing concerned Nature, our place - as humans - in Nature and the Cosmos; the purpose, if any, of our lives; whether or not the five Aristotelian essentials gave a true understanding of the external world; and whether or not God, or Allah, or some sort of divinity or divinities, existed, and thus - if they did not - whence came mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, and what value or validity, if any, did such mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, possess.

During the previous thirty or more years I had occasional intuitions concerning, or feelings, regarding, Nature, divinity, the Cosmos, and 'the numinous'; insights and feelings which led me to study Taoism, Hellenic culture, Buddhism, the Catholic mystic tradition, and become a Catholic monk. Later on, such intuitions concerning the numinous - and travels in the Sahara Desert - led me to begin a serious study of Islam and were part of the process that led me to convert to that way of life.

But these intuitions, feelings - and the understanding and knowledge they engendered - were or always eventually became secondary to what, since around 1964, I had considered or felt was the purpose of my own life. This was to aid, to assist, in some way the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and it was enthusiasm for - the inspiration of - that ideal which led me to seriously study the science of Physics, and then to seek to find what type of society might be able to make that ideal a reality, a seeking initially aided by my study of and enthusiasm for Hellenic culture, a culture - manifest in Greek heroes such as Odysseus and in the warrior society home to the likes of the sons of Atreus - which I came to regard as the ideal prototype for this new society of new explorers and new heroes.

After considering, and then rejecting, the communist society of the Soviet Union [1], an intuition regarding National-Socialist Germany [2] led me to seriously study that society and National-Socialism, a study ended when I peremptorily concluded that I had indeed found the right type of modern society. Thus I became a National-Socialist, with my aim - the purpose of my life - being to aid the foundation of a new National-Socialist State as a prelude to the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and thus the creation of a Galactic Imperium, a new Galactic, or Cosmic, Reich.

As I wrote in part one of some autobiographical scribblings issued in 1998 and which were based on some writings of mine dating back to the 1970's:

"It is the vision of a Galactic Empire which runs through my political life just as it is the quest to find and understand our human identity, and my own identity, and our relation to Nature, which runs through my personal and spiritual life, giving me the two aims which I consistently pursued since I was about thirteen years of age, regardless of where I was, what I was doing and how I was described by others or even by myself..."



For it was this aim of the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and my rather schoolboyish enthusiasm for it, which - together with the enjoyment of the struggle - inspired my fanaticism, my extremism, and which re-inspired me when, as sometimes occurred during my NS decades, my enthusiasm for politics, for a political revolution, waned, or when my intuitions, my feelings, concerning the numinous and my love of women - the dual inspiration for most of my poetry - became stronger than my political beliefs and my revolutionary fervour.

The aim, the purpose, this idealization, regarding Outer Space even partly motivated my study of and thence my conversion to Islam in 1998. For example, not long before that conversion, in an essay entitled *Foreseeing The Future*, I wrote:

" I firmly believe that Islam has the potential to create not only a new civilization, governed according to reason, but also a new Empire which could take on and overthrow the established world-order dedicated as this world-order is to usury, decadence and a god-less materialism [...] I also believe that a new Islamic Empire could create the Galactic Empire, or at least lay the foundations of it. Perhaps the first human colonies on another world will have as their flag the Islamic crescent, a flag inscribed with the words, in Arabic, In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful."

Thus, as when a National-Socialist, I dedicated myself to my 'new cause', to an ideal I idealistically carried in the headpiece of my head: the cause of Jihad, of disrupting existing societies as a prelude to manufacturing a new one. In this instance, a resurgent Khilafah.

As with National-Socialism, it was the ideal, the goal, the struggle, which was paramount, important; and I - like the extremist I was - hubriatically placed that goal, that ideal, that struggle for victory, before love, fairness, compassion, reason, and truth, and thus engendered and incited violence, hatred, and killing.

In addition, I always felt myself bound by honour to be loyal to either a cause, an ideology, or to certain individuals and so do the duty I had sworn by oath to do and be loyal to those I had sworn to be loyal to. Hence when doubts about my beliefs arose during my decades as a nazi I always had recourse to honour and so considered myself - even during my time as a monk - as a National-Socialist, albeit, when a monk, as a non-active one for whom there was ultimately no contradiction between the NS ethos and the ethos of a traditional Catholicism, for there was the Reichskonkordat and the agreement Pope Pius XII reached with Hitler.

During my Muslim years I felt bound by the oath of my Shahadah; an oath which negated my NS beliefs and led me to reject racism and nationalism, and embrace the multi-racialism of the Ummah; and which general oath, together (and importantly) with a personal oath sworn a few years after my conversion, would always - until 2009 - bring me back, or eventually cause me to drift back, to Islam and always remind me of the duty I felt I was, as a Muslim, honour-bound to do.

## 2002-2006

This drift back toward Islam is what occurred after my musings in 2002. I tried to forget them, a task made difficult when later that year I went to live on a farm and also work on another nearby farm. For that living and such work brought a deep personal contentment and further intuitions and feelings, and a burgeoning understanding, regarding the numinous, and especially concerning Nature; some of which intuitions and feelings I again communicated by means of handwritten letters, mostly to the aforementioned lady.

For a while I sought to find a synthesis, studied Sufism, but was unable to find any satisfactory answers, and thus began an interior struggle, a personal struggle I made some mention of in *Myngath*. A struggle, a conflict, between my own intuitions, insights, and burgeoning understanding - regarding the numinous and human beings - and the way of faith and belief; between what I felt was a more natural, a more numinous way, and the necessary belief in Allah, the Quran, the Sunnah that Islam, that being Muslim, required.

For a while, faith and belief and duty triumphed; then I wavered, and began to write in more detail about this still as yet unformed 'numinous way'. Then, yet again honour, duty, and loyalty triumphed - but only a while - for I chanced to meet and then fell in love with a most beautiful, non-Muslim, lady. And it was our relationship - but most of all her tragic death in May 2006 - that intensified my inner struggle and forced me to ask and then answer certain fundamental questions regarding my past and my own nature.

As I wrote at the time:

" Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant, vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was [...] I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am. How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words."

I did not like the answers about myself that this tragedy forced me to find; indeed, I did not like myself and so, for a while, clung onto Islam, onto being Muslim; onto the way of faith, of God, of ignoring my own answers, my own feelings, my own intuitions. For there was - or so it then seemed - expiation, redemption, hope, and even some

personal comfort, there. But this return to such surety just felt wrong, deeply wrong.

## 2006-2009

For there was, as I wrote in *Myngath*,

"...one uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei-mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us - far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, beings we have been, and unfortunately often still are; far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, often violent, person I had been."

Thus I was prompted - forced - to continue to develop my understanding in what began to be and became my own 'numinous way' and which thus and finally and, in 2009 publicly, took me away from Islam and my life as a Muslim.

## 2009-2012

Given that the essence of The Numinous Way is individual empathy, an individual understanding, the development of an individual judgement, and the living of an ethical way of life where there is an appreciation of the numinous, the more I reflected upon this 'numinous way' between 2011 and Spring 2012, the more I not only realized my mistakes, but also that it was necessary to remove, to excise, the detritus that had accumulated around the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that inspired me to develop that 'numinous way'. Mistakes and detritus because for some time, during the development of that 'numinous way', I was still in thrall to some abstractions, still thinking in terms of categories and opposites, and still fond of pontificating and generalizing, especially about The State [3]. I therefore began to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the personal, the individual, the ontological, the ethical and spiritual nature, of The Numinous Way, and thus emphasized the virtues of humility, love, and of wu-wei - of balance, of tolerance, of non-interference, of individual interior (spiritual) reformation, of non-striving, of admitting one's own uncertainty of understanding and of knowing.

The year-long [2011-2012] process of refinement, correction, and reflexion resulted in me re-naming what remained of my 'numinous way' the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', and which philosophy I attempted to outline in the two texts *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Summary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, the latter of which was also published under the title *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

As I mentioned in *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos* [Part Four of *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*] -

"Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means [...]

This means that there is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and

uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example."

## The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

It is the philosophy of pathei-mathos which represents my weltanschauung. For I now consider that most of my writings, my pontifications, concerning 'the numinous way' - written haphazardly between 2002 and Spring 2012 - are unhelpful; or of little account; or irrelevant; or hubriatic; or detract from or obscure the basic simplicity of my weltanschauung, a simplicity I have endeavoured to express in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

DWM  
24th April 2012  
(Revised November 2012)

### Notes

[1] During this study of communism, in the 1960's, I began to learn Russian and would regularly listen to communist radio broadcasts such as those from Rundfunk der DDR, something I continued to do for a while even after becoming a National-Socialist. Indeed, on one occasion I wrote a letter to Radio Berlin which, to my surprise, was read out with my questions answered and this - occurring as it did during the Cold War - may well have been when I first came to the attention of the British security services.

[2] As I have mentioned elsewhere - for example, in *Myngath* - this intuition regarding the Third Reich arose as a result of me reading an account of the actions of Otto Ernst Remer in July of 1944. For I admired his honour and his loyalty and his commitment to the duty he had sworn an oath to do. Here, I felt, was a modern-day Greek hero.

[3] These un-numinous, errorful, hubriatic, pontifications about 'the state' included essays such as the reprehensible January 2011 text *The Failure and Immoral Nature of The State* and the February 2011, text *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*.

Among the abstractions (categories) which needed to be excised from a supposedly abstraction-less and empathic numinous way were 'the clan', and 'culture', and the divisive category 'homo hubris', a divisive category I hubriatically pontificated about in essays such as the 2009 text *Homo Hubris and the Disruption of the Numinous*, based as that text was on an earlier, 2002, essay.

---

### Acknowledgements:

This article is based on - and summarizes and/or quotes from - several replies sent to various correspondents during April of this year (2012)

**cc David Myatt 2012**

(Second Edition)

This work is issued under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

Image credit: Attic Vase c. 480 BCE, depicting Athena (Antikensammlungen, Munich, Germany)

---

---

May 2013 Edition

## Myngath

**Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life**  
**by David Myatt**



ooo

## **Contents**

### *Part One*

- Apologia
- Early Years
- Ecce Ego Contra
- Facies Abyssi

### *Part Two*

- Sensus Internus
- Pathei-Mathos
- The Numinous Way/Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

Appendix 1 - Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing

Appendix 2 - The Development of the Numinous Way

Appendix 3 - Ethos of Extremism

ooo

## **Part One**

### **Apologia**

This work is a concise recalling - as an aural recollection to a friend, recorded and then transcribed - of some events in my wyrdful and sometimes quite eventful life. A concise recalling of some events (with much left unwritten), because it is the essence of this particular life, recalled, that in my fallible view is or rather may be instructive, and I have tried to present this essence in a truthful way and thus be honest about my failings, my mistakes, my past activities, and my feelings at the time.

As a friend who read a draft of Myngath commented, "It is a strange work because the supra-personal adventures gradually give way to very personal encounters..."

Which in many ways sums up my life - a hubriatic quest, by an arrogant selfish opinionated violent young man, which led to involvement with various extremisms and certain dubious activities; then, via πάθει μάθος, to a certain critical self-understanding often, or mostly, deriving from personal relationships; then to a rejection of all extremism; and finally to the

development of a rather mystical philosophy - the philosophy of pathei-mathos - based on empathy and personal virtues such as compassion and humility.

A somewhat strange life, therefore; although, as I wrote in *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*:

"There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by others..."

DWM  
2010

ooo

## **Early Years**

### *Africa*

My earliest - and some of my fondest - memories are of colonial Africa in the 1950s, where I, as a quite young child, spent many happy years. There are memories of travelling, with my father, in a car - with running boards and coach doors - along an upward road in the Great Rift Valley, and which road seemed to drop precipitously on one side, and which steep slopes held many a crashed vehicle, recent, and otherwise. There are memories of travelling to a European-only resort - by Lake Naivasha, I seem to recall - where there was a path down to the lake strewn with beautiful flowering plants, and where one could spend many happy hours while, in the clubhouse, elderly (to

me) memsaabs would down their G&T's.

There are memories of playing in a shallow river near our dwelling in East Africa - no one around for miles - and of a family picnic by another, quite distant and deeper, far wider, river on whose bank was a wooden sign with the inscription *Beware of the Crocodile*. There are memories of going AWOL and walking - with the younger of my two sisters - miles and miles along a road, into the bush, and which road I had been told was off-limits to Europeans. We stopped once, as the Sun descended on that travelling day, to drink from our canteen of water and open the tin of beans I carried which we ate, cold (being even then of a practical outdoor nature, I had ensured I had a can opener). I seem to recall the Police - a European officer and his Askari - found us as dark fell, and I could not understand what all the fuss was about. Since everybody said we should not go there, I simply had to go and see what was there - which turned out to be just a road from somewhere to somewhere else.

There are memories of climbing trees - and falling from one and breaking my left arm. My younger sister - a companion on many such outdoor exploits - for some reason knew what to do, and made a sling from my shirt. Memories of - inadvertently I must add in my defence - smashing the glass counter of an Asian owned shop in the nearest village, whose owner demanded my father pay for the damage, which, of course, he did. I just had, you see, to try and juggle with some of the brass weights the shopkeeper used for his balancing scales. There is a memory of walking through some trees not far from my favourite stream and instinctively, with the panga I often carried while outdoors, chopping the head off a Cobra which, startled, reared up in front of me.

My interests were the interests I found by being outdoors. There was a colony of safari ants, for instance, that I chanced upon one day while out wandering, and I would spend hours watching them as their wide columns moved and marched across the reddish ground. Then there were the Chameleons I once, for some reason, long forgotten, wanted to find, and did, bringing one home to keep as a pet, which I did until I lost interest.

Once - for perhaps a year, or possibly more - I was packed off to some Catholic prep school, about which I remember very little except falling asleep a few times in lessons, and wandering off, into the grounds, when something interested me, or when I wanted to climb some tree. I do remember having a rather large magnifying glass and spending what seemed like many happy hours peering at things, outside. Perhaps I should have been in class - for I have vague recollections of being shouted at, by some adults, who seemed somewhat angry, and being somewhat bemused by all the fuss, as I recall on

one occasion receiving six strokes of the cane for - something. Perhaps it was because - once, when the Sun reached in through a classroom window - I accidentally set fire to some papers on my desk using my magnifying glass. But, for whatever reason, I was soon and gladly returned to my parents (perhaps I got expelled), and life for me continued as before, mostly outdoors, mostly day-dreaming, and quite often exploring.

### *Far East*

Africa faded into the Far East - as the decade of the fifties faded to a few years past a new one - and to life in what was then a rural area, not far from a lovely sandy beach by the South China Sea, and a service-taxi ride from the still then rather ramshackle and quixotic city of Singapore with its riverside cluttered with row upon row of Junks, and many of its streets festooned with stalls.

For some reason I soon had to go to school, every day, and by Gharry. At first, I loathed it - bumph to read, sitting at some desk, sometimes in the air-conditioned main building, and sometimes in the much better open-air Attaps in the grounds. Then - and quite why I do not now recall - I began to enjoy it. Perhaps it was the running track, where I loved to run, barefoot in the tropical heat; perhaps it was the young, gorgeous, blonde, English teacher who would often sit on one of the desks at the front, her legs crossed, and read to us some story, some poem, or some part of some classic novel. Whatever it was, I began to look forward to that school where by the end of the term, I was "second in the class", and top in several subjects, including (if my ageing memory is correct) English and Maths. I developed an almost insatiable appetite for knowledge, and began to read voraciously - especially about Physics, Astronomy, and History. In addition, I learnt ancient Greek, and Sanskrit, and studied formal logic.



It was as if I had suddenly, quite unexpectedly, acquired a new way of seeing the world around me; as if some unseen force, some *wyrd*, some *δαίμων*, had shaken me and awoken within me certain dormant faculties. Or perhaps it was just the lovely tropical weather, the quixotic surroundings.

Whatever, through and with these faculties, with the knowledge I imbibed



from books, a feeling, an insight, came to dwell within me. This was of our potential, as human beings; of how we might - and indeed should - change ourselves in a conscious way through overcoming challenges, as I had grown in strength and insight through running, training, through swimming often almost a mile out to sea, and through devouring knowledge. This insight became a vision of, as I have written elsewhere, "us freeing ourselves from the chains of this world and venturing forth to explore and colonize the stars. For I felt that it was this new freedom, brought by venturing forth to the stars, which would give us the great challenges needed to evolve still further, and naturally, into another type of being. And it was the pursuit of this ideal which I believed would create noble individuals and a noble, civilized, society..." [1]

By this time, both my sisters had left home, to be properly educated in England, something which I had wilfully resisted. One became - for some years - a Nun; the elder, a nurse at a teaching hospital in London, at a time when competition for such places at such a place was fierce, and required, I seem to recall, two 'A' levels.

As for me, I was enjoying my new life. Some years previously, I had taught myself to play chess, and now I began to play it at every opportunity, including at a local chess club (almost exclusively European, again if my ageing memory is correct) where I was the only boy. Some visiting Chess grandmaster was giving a simultaneous display - at the Singapore Polytechnic - and so off I went, one among perhaps thirty or so competitors, and one of only a few to manage to draw against him. And it was there, while wandering around, that I first saw a display of Martial Arts. It was almost balletic; full of seemingly effortless grace, and I felt at once that I wanted to be able to do that, to move so gracefully with the ability to generate, direct and control a certain physical power. So, youthful, vibrant, and arrogantly naive, I approached them. At first they - those Chinese men - seemed surprised, if not somewhat amused, that a young European boy (wearing white socks, khaki shorts, white shirt, and sandals) would be interested. But I persisted, and was invited to meet them a week later, at the place where they practised.

I remember that journey well. The service taxi dropped me near the Capitol cinema in Singapore city and, with a mixture of excitement and nervousness, I walked past that restaurant - much frequented by my father and I - that served rather good steak, chips, and fried tomatoes, for what seemed a long way. The young men were surprised to see me, although an elderly gentleman was not, and thus began my training. To be honest, I never became very good, and certainly no match for most of those there, and subsequently. But I doggedly persisted - so much so that, after many weeks, I

was invited to join them on their usual post-session foray among the eating stalls by the river, and did not arrive back home until well past midnight, much to the relief of my mother who was on the verge of calling the Police.

Thus began my interest in and study of what, at the time, we colonial Europeans often called Oriental Philosophy, and thus was I invited to the rather splendid home - complete with garden - of one of the Masters of that particular Martial Art. From this developed an interest, both practical and theoretical, in philosophy, and religions, in general, including Hindu, Chinese, and Buddhist philosophy, religion, and practices, and Singapore was certainly a good place to learn about such things, given its diversity of culture, and replete as it was with Buddhist, Hindu, Taoist, temples and places of gathering. A good place, also, to be initiated, as a boy, into the delights of women; or, more correctly, learning of and from the delights of young delightful foreign ladies.

### *Fenland Beauty*

Fade, to England on a dull, cloudy, cold day. An aeroplane; a long journey, broken by some days in Ceylon. The descent down through the clouds on the way to landing in England was quite bleak, for me. Everything looked so enervating, and for several weeks after arriving in England my only desire was to return to the Far East, or Africa. My father felt the same, and began to seek alternative employment in Africa, while I, to alleviate my boredom and inner bleakness, took to cycling the fenland country around and beyond the small village where we were, temporarily, staying. There was talk of school, but I artfully resisted, manufacturing a variety of excuses while I waited for my father to succeed. He did, some place further south in Africa than where we had lived, and near the Zambezi river, which rather interested me, although my initial joy on learning this was tempered by the reality of us - my mother and I - having to wait six months before we could join him, given the relative isolation of the place, his need to find us accommodation, and other sundry practical matters. The desire I had nurtured, for some time, to study assiduously, and go to an English University to read Physics, slowly dwindled; the dull cold bleakness of the English weather as water thrown upon that fire.

So I left home, at age fifteen, to lodge with a widowed lady in the nearby town, and spend what I assumed would be only six months at some College morosely and not at all seriously studying for 'O' levels. College work was easy, and at times boring, and I spent most weekends cycling mostly southwards, coming to enjoy the physical exertion, the landscape itself, and almost always taking a selection of books with me, carried in my saddlebag.

But there was something else, engendered by these journeys. A sense, a feeling - a wordless intuition - of not being apart from that particular fenland landscape, with its vast panorama of sky, its fertile soil, its often wide drainage ditches that, though hewed by humans, centuries of natural change had melded into being a part of Nature, there. It was as if this land - of small hamlets, small villages, scattered farms, with its panorama of horizons - was alive in an almost unique way.

I took to staying out on clear and moonlit nights. To cycling lanes by light of moon. There was a strange, eerie, beauty there, at these times - almost as if I, myself, was not quite real; that there lay a hidden world, an older, world, a far slower, world, where one might hear the whisperings of trees or hear the distant call of someone calling; someone long dead but not quite gone from the land, here; someone who did not belong in the other, modern, world that now edged this older fenland country.



Fenland

There is no rational explanation for how or even why I met her. Perhaps - as I thought thereafter - it was she who met me, and meant to. Who somehow might have enchanted me to be there on that day at that hour in that year of my youth. As if she, also, was from, or part of, this other esoteric living land.

There were mysteries there that I did not then consciously fathom, but rather lived with and through, and which even now - over forty years later - I have only just begun to rationally understand as a natural and muliebral presencing of The Numen. Mysteries, perhaps, I felt then, of an ancient way never written down, and which no words, no book, could bind, contain, restrain, reveal. Mysteries of the connexion that links all Life together.

All I knew then was the occupant of that solitary small house along a narrow

isolated lane near where the fenland waters, still, in those days, rose in some years to flood the land around and where a boat was kept, with daily life lived, if needed, on upper floors as in olden days. All I felt then, in the moment of that meeting and the hour beyond, was such an intense desire to stay as almost subsumed me. To stay - as one would stay stunned momentarily by the gorgeosity of some sunset, or by some vista suddenly chanced upon. No words sufficed, were needed, but we then idly talked nonetheless - I, leaning on my bicycle; she standing beside the broken fence that seemed to mark the inner sanctum of her sacred world.

It was not that I expected, then - or even hoped for - some kind of sexual tryst. But there she was, somewhat older than me, pretty in a comely way, standing, smiling, as I had slowly passed. It was not that I was lost and needed directions; a recent map was always carried in my bag. Not that I needed water. I had my flask of milkless Oolong tea. Not that I... But I stopped, nevertheless, dismounted, to slowly saunter back.

I have no clear recollection of what we said, for it is all now as a fading dream, remembered in the hour past rising from fitful unrestful sleep. No clear recollection of the two weeks that passed until I, unable to resist, ventured there again.

Mostly - as on that day of my first returning - we together just sat close to each other in the inner dimness of that well-worn dwelling. Sometimes a fire was lit; almost always there was tea. Sometimes we would walk together upon the land around. And we spoke, when needed not desired.

For it was a certain sensitivity that we seemed to share - a certain strangeness, a mostly wordless strangeness that I had previously not encountered; except, perhaps, in moments swiftly gone, as when one day the young, gorgeous, blonde, English teacher I still remember so well was reading to our class a poem and our eyes met, and it was if she somehow in some strange way then imparted in me not only her understanding of those words but also the feelings they engendered in her so that I, also, understood and felt the meaning behind such words. As if in that one short strange moment she had brought alive that work of Art so that it connected us, bridged us. So much so that for days afterwards I carried a copy of that poem around with me, and read it when I could to push open again that door that led to some distant different land. But, then, of course, the feeling faded, and some new interest, some new source of inspiration, came along; as - for me - that poem became surpassed, by others.

There was a walk, next time. Some talk about land, sky, Sun, Moon, rain, trees, insects, birds, and soil, and although I did not realize it then, I was

learning; a learning, a species of learning, I once, many years later, strived to contain, constrain, reveal, with my own poor collocation of words:

Being the water: the Dragonfly above the water  
I grieve of the road and the bridge of the road  
Weeping in the wind  
Because I am the Sun.

Being the river: all the river things  
I feel the wounds  
Inflicted deeply in my flesh  
Because I am the dust.

Being the river-banks: the land around the banks  
I am no-Time  
Burning to cauterize my wounds  
Because I am the world and all things of the world;

Being the wind: the words of the wind  
I sorrow in my-Time  
Knowing people who pass  
Because they are my wounds.

Being my sorrow: the sorrow of wounded land  
I sense the knowing turning beyond the pain  
Because I am the water  
Flowing with no end

There were other shared times, some when we simply listened to music. And then came that night when we two finally became lovers. Other such nights came; went, as the Moon, as the lady herself, cycled through several monthly phases.

It could have lasted; perhaps it should have lasted, for that is what she possibly, probably, wanted: for me to stay with her in that cottage of hers. But I was young, restless, impetuous, and in truth perhaps too selfish; too enwrapped in my own inner visions, dreams, desires; certainly, I was often impetuously youthful but not in love. Enchanted certainly, but no, not in love.

Thus arrived that day when I felt I had to leave, to never wilfully return - she stood there, by her dwelling, as I bicycled away, and although I did not know it then, she was only the first spinning of that muliebral thread that was to bind my diverse lives together.

## *Toward First Love*

A rather generous allowance from my father enabled books to be purchased, and travel, by means of train, to anywhere that interested me, and so one day I travelled to London to visit bookshops, and the British Museum.

But that journey was fruitful in other ways. Arrogant and self-assured as I was - somewhat helped by my Martial Arts training - I spent some evening time in less salubrious parts of London, desirous of finding some suitable young lady to entertain me, remembering as I did such Singaporean trysts and wistfully recalling as I did that Fenland enchantress.

I did find such a lady, and, after a short taxi ride (which I of course paid for) we arrived at the entrance to a large town house in Chalk Farm. We had reached the top of that first tier of inside stairs (which led to her room) when some loud commotion broke out below. A man, shouting; a woman's loud voice. From the stairs I saw a man push open the front door that a woman was, vainly, trying to close. He turned, shouted a few obscenities, and drew back his clenched fist, as if to strike the woman. He did not succeed. I cannot remember what I said, only that I said something to him after vaulting down that flight of stairs toward him. He replied with a vulgar epithet or two, and lunged at me. I simply turned, stepped sideways and used his own momentum to throw him to the ground by which time a huge man had arrived from some inside room to lift him, with remarkable ease, to his feet and almost bodily carry him out where he pushed him down the steps that led up from the pavement to that front door. The man lay motionless, briefly, there, then rose, slowly, to betake himself shabbily away, uttering curses as he did so.

I was thanked, by the lady he had intended to attack, and invited to join her for a glass of Sherry in her ground-floor rooms.

Thus began our friendship. Or, more correctly, relationship. Somewhat more than a decade older than me, with an enchanting if rather mischievous smile, she never once in the hours we spent together talking, that evening, mentioned the nature of her business, as I had no need to ask. It was all rather genteel, as she herself was, even though a trace of her local accent remained, and I found her quite enchanting, as, of course, she knew, drawing forth from me in those hours the then so brief story of my still so youthful life, and, our provided supper over, it seemed natural, an unspoken assumption between us, for me to stay the night with her. My stay became

the following day, and then the day after that. There was a restaurant, of sorts, nearby, where she was known by name, and we spent a few hours there, eating a meal, and drinking wine, that neither of us paid for. I was introduced to her ladies, and to that huge man of the shaven head, who though rather grim looking had a gentle sense of humour. People - men and mostly well-dressed - came and went throughout most of the day and evening, and when my own self-appointed time came to leave, I did so with much reluctance and with a promise to return at the ending of that week.

I kept my promise, and it was to become the first of many such visits during those my early learning years. We had a simple, an uncomplicated, relationship, which was always honest, and I am not ashamed to say that in a way I loved her, in my then still rather boyish way, and - looking back, now - she almost certainly understood me far better than I then understood myself.

It is difficult, this understanding  
Of my love:

I have to rise every morning  
With the intention of our future  
Moulded as some sculptors mould  
Their souls around a form  
That Will soon powers to a shape  
In Time.

It is difficult, this sharing  
Of each dream that makes her to journey  
To the joining of our selves  
And spills desire the way some music  
Spills some notes to form the suggestion  
Of some god:

There is no journey bribed by dread  
No sea that sets the horizon  
As the yearning of the dead sets  
The seal to future Time;  
There is no calling and no called:  
No passing and no one passed  
Since there is no you or I to understand  
The laked reflexion of each moon.

But I forget, and need to remember  
At each new beginning of each new  
Dream which is the beginning of our  
Love.

There are no words needed  
As there are no excuses

For the failures of some Art:

It is difficult, this speaking  
Of my love.

One weekend I particularly remember. Some hours were spent lazily strolling through what she insisted on calling *The Regent's Park*; some hours were spent listening to Jazz at some small club (she was a Jazz aficionado and very knowledgeable about that genre); and some hours spent at dinner in an excellent restaurant; and it was after midnight when we returned, by taxi, to her house. I remember then feeling pleased, and somewhat privileged, to be a part of her world - a young man who certainly felt, and behaved, much older than he was. Perhaps it was my childhood years in Africa and the Far East, perhaps my still then somewhat arrogant nature, perhaps my Martial Arts training, perhaps the manners my mother instilled into me and the liberal, rather laissez-faire, attitude of my father; whatever it was, I felt and acted quite differently from all the other young men of my age that I knew, some of whom, no doubt considered me elitist, arrogant, and somewhat condescending.

ooo

### **Ecce Ego Contra...**

#### *Political Initiation*

One day - a Saturday - I was idly walking around the centre of London, sort-of heading for the house of my lady friend. Sort-of, because in those days, I quite enjoyed such walks, in still unfamiliar cities and towns. A chance to stroll past places; watch people pass by; become immersed in my surroundings. I had a good sense of direction, and seldom needed to consult the London map that I carried in the pocket of my Corduroy jacket. Indeed, it was often interesting to get a little lost - to find new sights, places.

In those days I still dressed somewhat conventionally, conservatively: Corduroy or Tweed jacket, flannel or Tweed trousers; sturdy brown walking shoes; even linen shirts with detachable collars held in place by studs inlaid



with mother-of-pearl. Short hair, of course; and a rather heavy Tweed overcoat, for when the weather was cold.

Thus attired (*sans* overcoat) I chanced, on that day, upon some fracas in some street. Young men brawling. I had no idea at all what it was all about - but it seemed to me somewhat unfair, since one young lad was getting battered by several others. Without thinking, I waded in to help him. There was that exhilaration, again. That love of direct physical violence I had felt before. A few more young lads joined the melee, and then it was over, and so we went, quite naturally, to some nearby Public House to celebrate our victory. Their accepting camaraderie was wonderfully refreshing, and many hours were spent, drinking - and talking politics.

Not that I was then ignorant of their type of politics. Indeed, I had spent many of the previous months eagerly reading about nationalism, about National-Socialist Germany, and especially about Adolf Hitler, inspired by an account of the actions of Otto Ernst Remer, on that day in July 1944 during the Second World War. Such loyalty; such a sense of duty; such honour; such forthright warrior action.

To me, in the moment of my reading, then as after, Remer seemed the perfect embodiment of the warrior; of the type of person who might build the new society I had often theorized about - precursor as that society would be for our exploration and colonization of the stars. Now, it seemed to me, I had met a similar type of people. Or at least, those who could, given training, direction, guidance, purpose, be such people. Young; enthusiastic; who seemed to share something - if only instinctively - of my dream and who, like me, seemed to enjoy and welcome violence. They had a meeting, arranged for the following weekend, and I was invited and gladly accepted. I went to the meeting - and the "social" afterwards - and it was there I met someone who knew Colin Jordan, whom I had already heard of. Thus, it seemed logical, indeed necessary, that I contact CJ myself, which I did, by posted letter.

It was, perhaps, a propitious time. A new political movement had been formed, by CJ, and I began to seriously consider how the new society I had envisioned might be created. It also seemed to me then - and for a long while afterwards - that Hitler's National-Socialist Germany was, and should be, the archetype for such a new society: that NS Germany embodied most, though not all, the ideals I then saw as necessary to the creation of such a new, warrior, society imbued with a Galactic ethos.

For nearly a year I came to inhabit three quite separate worlds. My lady

friend, in London, the world of occasionally violent but always interesting political activism; and my academic studies. Thus, I was fully occupied; enthused; alive; replete with my various ways of living, so that when the date for my return to Africa drew ever nearer, there really was no need to make a decision, for my lives seemed then inextricably linked with England. It seemed, then, as if it really was me against: you; the world; against everyone, except my political comrades and my lady friend.

During these trips to London, 'O' levels at College came and went, and I drifted into the Sixth Form. It was tempting to leave, and move to live and work in London, based with my lady friend, but the promise of Physics still enthralled me, a little, particularly as at that time the Apollo program looked it would easily achieve the goal that had been set - soon, perchance, there would bases on the Moon, and then on Mars. So I plugged away at Physics, without much enthusiasm, feeling it might be different at University when I would be free to undertake my own study, experiments, research. A feeling which led me to consider applying to King's College, Cambridge; which, after consultation with my teachers, I did and, probably due to their recommendation, secured and attended an interview.

Increasingly, however, my lives became a distraction from schoolwork, but I seemed to have some innate talent for mathematics and Physics and so - studying very little (some weeks, not at all) - I plodded on, trusting in this talent to get me through [2].

ooo

## **Facies Abyssi**

### *University*

Fast forward to a University in the north of England, and a still young student, who had grown well-trimmed moustaches and who, unlike the majority of other students, was always rather conservatively attired. My first term as an undergraduate had been a great disappointment following a Summer vacation of anticipation, and awaiting examination results.

No, wait - let us rewind, briefly, to that Summer vacation, after 'A' level exams were over. I had, perhaps rather foolishly, spent the weekends - and

often the free days - of these examination weeks embroiled elsewhere. Attending political rallies, meetings, staying with political associates; and - more enjoyable - staying with my lady friend in London.

Possibly not so foolishly, since - in retrospection - I was, as became something of a habit, letting the Fates, *wyrd*, decide my fate when, as often happened, I vacillated between two or more options, waiting until a particular course of life seemed obvious, even to me. I had studied very little in the six months preceding those examinations, trusting to my talent, and busy elsewhere doing what, at the time and for almost a year before, were far more exciting and interesting things. So interesting and so exciting - so redolent of promise - that I even took the radical step of writing to King's College and withdrawing my application, feeling at the time and for quite a while afterwards that my future lay in London with a certain lady. A feeling which led me to impetuously send a request, via postcard, to the BBC radio programme *Jazz Record Requests* (a programme I knew she listened to), mentioning her first name and requesting - "with love from David" - a recording of the MJQ "with Milt Jackson on vibes". My request was successful, and I enjoyed a most memorable weekend in London with her. But then, months later, laboratory experiments led me to dream again of University; until - weeks or even days later - I began to desire again to move to London to stay with her... Thus, if I failed my examinations, I could not possibly go on to University, and the decision regarding my direction would be clear, fated.

'A' level exams over, I spent a lot of that Summer working, in a mundane job, for my allowance from my father never did, in those days, seem to meet all my needs, for I loved to treat a certain lady to the occasional 'long weekend away'. On the last day of Term, and slightly inebriated after a lunch-time session down the nearby Pub with friends, I had met one of only two girls (EH and JJ) in my Sixth Form. EH and I had flirted before, and I liked her, as I felt she liked me, but I had kept a deliberate distance, given my assignments in London, for to have yet another intimate relationship would have been for me, at that time, just far too complicated. But on that day - a warm sunny one, I seem to recall - as we passed each other outside the refectory I embraced her. She eagerly returned the embrace, and we kissed for a long time, much to the amusement of some other students, passing by, who knew us both.

Thereafter I did not see her again for a while, reverting back to keeping my distance, until I heard from a mutual friend that she was having some trouble with her landlord (like me, she had rented rooms for the Summer in our local town). Perhaps I misheard, or misunderstood the situation - but I thought I was informed that she had been threatened. Without hesitation I went back

to my rooms to procure a weapon (one always keeps a selection handy). In this case, a pickaxe handle, and - suitably attired in the working type clothes I wore to work: jeans, brown leather jacket, heavy boots - I made my way through the streets to where he lived. My insistent knocking on his front door brought him out, and although I cannot remember what I said, I know he understood. I threatened him. I was just so angry; madly unthinkingly angry, full of rage, and prepared for a bloody fight. In that moment nothing existed except him and that, my rage. He was a tall and stocky man - bigger than me - but perhaps his own nature, or maybe something in my demeanour, my eyes, made him meekly agree to my demands. And so I left, still full of rage, and it was only as I was nearing my own rooms, somewhat calmer, that it occurred to me I was carrying what the Police would call an "offensive weapon".

Some days later, I was to learn that her landlord problems had been solved, and that she desired to see me, but I never did meet with her again.

So, fast forward again to University - that revealing of a part of my youthful character over - and back to that first Term, there. As I mentioned, I was so disappointed. I had gone somewhat naively believing I could study at my own pace, focus on topics that interested me, and do some practical experiments of my own devising. As it was, it was in many ways worse than school.

The lectures were tedious, rote-learning, affairs where one had to make copious notes and after which one was presented with a list of boring problems to be solved, each problem being of the type one might find in 'A' level examinations. Laboratory work as just as routine, even though one did have some choice as to what, of the listed experiments, one might undertake. Serious intellectual discussion, among the students, was at a premium - when it arose, which was rarely - and even the lecturers did not seem that scientifically curious. They had students to teach; or rather, certain parts of certain subjects to get through, every week.

One incident in particular made me seriously consider leaving, and involved a laboratory experiment. Toward the end of the first Term we were given the opportunity to devise and carry out our own experiments. I chose to replicate the Michelson-Morley experiment, having a particular interest in the theories that gave rise to this attempt to detect "the aether".

I was informed that such an experiment was really more suited to a Graduate, or Third-Year, student, but, of course, I ignored all the excuses and the advice that I was given as to why I should not try. Finally, I got my way,

and was allotted a large part of one of the laboratory darkrooms. Suffice to say that it took me a while to set the experiment up, and even longer to tweak the equipment to get it ready: many weeks, in fact, despite spending many afternoons in the laboratory. I festooned my area with signs telling everyone not to touch the equipment. Then, I began to get some results. A few days later I returned, eager and excited, only to find that some lecturer had pushed all my equipment into one corner in order to set up some experiment for his students, thus destroying my weeks of delicate work. Not only that, I had "run out of time"; the darkroom really was needed by other students.

Strangely, I was not angry, just filled with an abyssal disappointment. It was as if some far distant apparently quixotic landscape which I had been eagerly travelling toward, for a long and arduous while, had at last been reached only to be revealed as ordinary, dull, devoid of any real interest at all.

Thus, gradually, my interest in studying physics waned, until - by the end of the next term - it has almost completely disappeared, replaced by increasing political activities, and a renewed desire to live and work in London. However, even though I never did any studious work, from that, my abyssal laboratory-moment, onwards, I still somehow managed to come second in mathematics at the end of year exams. There were various travels, and some trysts:

Here I have stopped  
Because only Time goes on within my dream:

Yesterday I was awoken, again,  
And she held me down  
With her body warmth  
Until, satisfied, I went alone  
Walking  
And trying to remember:

A sun in a white clouded sky  
Morning dawn yellow  
Sways the breath that, hot, I exhale tasting of her lips.  
The water has cut, deep, into  
The estuary bank  
And the mallard swims against the flow -  
No movement, only effort.

Nearby - the foreign ship which brought me  
Is held by rusty chains  
Which, one day and soon  
And peeling them like its paint,  
Must leave.

Here I shall begin again  
Because Time, at last, has stopped  
Since I have remembered the dark ecstasy  
Which brought that war-seeking Dream

Meanwhile, my political involvements had intensified. I regularly attended political meetings, demonstrations, and activities, by various organizations, including BM and the NF, and at one such political foray I met Eddy Morrison and his friends. I immediately liked Morrison. He was enthusiastic, committed, optimistic, down-to-earth and quite *au fait* with National-Socialism. He also, at that time, possessed a certain personal charisma, and thus always had a few youthful followers who considered him their leader. One incident I remember well. He had invited me to join him and some of his friends on a day trip to Bridlington, an invitation which I accepted, and we ended up on the beach singing NS, and old BUF, songs.

A marvellous day, and I was genuinely sad when they dropped me off at my then place of University residence and went back to their city of Leeds, and it was not long before I joined them, again, for some political event or other. Morrison introduced me to his family, with whom I had a meal, and then off we went into the centre of his home city to raucously harangue some Communist paper-sellers and generally make a nuisance of ourselves. Morrison was far more experienced in practical street politics than I, and the more time I spent with him, the more it dawned on me that perhaps the two of us could not only make a name for ourselves but might, just might, be able to if not create the foundations of some new political force, then at least use an existing nationalist organization as means of gaining influence and power and thus begin to implement NS ideals.

It should be remembered that, at this time, the very early seventies, the NF regularly held large marches and rallies, all over England, with many of these marches involving violence, before, during, and after, and with many of these marches involving thousands of people. For instance, there was one march which I attended where those at the front had to physically fight their way through packs of Reds, with similar skirmishes occurring toward the rear. These were exciting times, and there really was a feeling, among the rank-and-file, that the NF was growing in such a way that, in a decade or more, it might be able to win or seize power.

Even CJ's British Movement was thriving, though in a much smaller way, and it was during this time that I came to act, on a few occasions, as CJ's bodyguard. Usually because the person who should have done that duty for

some reason was not there. One of these occasions was at an outdoor demonstration - in Wolverhampton I seem to recall - when CJ stood haranguing the sparse crowd from the back of a Land Rover, while I stood in front, trying to look as thuggish as possible. Another of these occasions was an indoor meeting, where I stood at the front of the hall when CJ spoke, again to a small crowd, from the raised stage behind me and on which occasion I brandished a Shillelagh, which weapon the two or three, somewhat bored, Police Officers in attendance were completely unconcerned about. The Good 'Ole Days. On a few other occasions I simply accompanied CJ (walking slightly behind) when he walked toward and from some meeting place or assembly point.

Compared to all this, my life at University seemed, and indeed was, boring; dull. Thus it seemed natural, inevitable - especially given my friendship with Morrison - that I move to Leeds, and become involved with street-politics full-time. Which I dutifully did. As often in my life, it seemed as if the Fates revealed to me the direction in which I should go. Thus, and yet again, there was a certain period of drifting, by me, until a particular course of life seemed obvious, even to me.

My next year was a learning process. Learning about people; learning more about political propaganda; speaking in public; organizing and participating in street fights and demonstrations. That is, it was a learning of the Art of the revolutionary political agitator. I loved the life; I adored the life, and while domiciled in Leeds, in a garret (on Meanwood Road) appropriate to a revolutionary, fanatical, political activist, I still found time to visit my lady friend, in London.

One incident during my University stay may be worth recording. I happened to get to know someone there (who incidentally introduced me to the writings of Mishima) who was a personal friend of Martin Webster, and I met Webster on several occasions, one following some fracas at the University after he had been invited to address some meeting or other. On one of these occasions we had a discussion about political propaganda - a discussion which continued by several letters we exchanged over subsequent weeks. The essence of this discussion was to do with truth. I was of the opinion that if "our Cause" was indeed correct, and noble, as I believed, then we had no need to write or produce propaganda which distorted the truth in order to gain recruits, or make us and our Cause appear in some positive way. So far as I recall, Webster was of the opinion that I was being rather naive, and that, in practical politics, and to a certain extent, "the end justifies the means", something I then did not agree with.

Furthermore, it was during my time at University that I acquired personal

experience of just how prejudiced some people could be - how they judged someone, for instance, according to their political views, or what they believed were their political views.

During my first few terms at University I had acquired something of a minor reputation as a fascist, helped no doubt by me handing out leaflets from the Racial Preservation Society outside meetings arranged by various Left-Wing and Communist groups. This led to several people actively disliking me - even hating me - although they did not know me, as a person, and made no effort to do so. Thus, they judged me a fascist, they did not like fascists, so they did not like me; or, even worse, they believed that fascists were "evil" and/or dangerous and therefore should and must "be dealt with". What I found curious was that these people, who so irrationally prejudged people on the basis of their alleged or assumed political views, were often the ones who also loudly proclaimed that prejudice (including racial prejudice) was immoral. Thus, they were doing exactly what they were condemning in others.

I did, however, find one political person - who belonged to some minor Marxist-Leninist group - who understood this, and who thus took the opportunity to get to know me and with whom I had many friendly discussions about politics, and life in general. And it was he who - along with a few cultured non-political individuals - somewhat helped restore my belief that humans were, or could be, rational, cultured, beings. Perhaps I should add these few cultured non-political individuals - three young men and a young lady - were all (as we now say) 'gay'. Indeed, with only one exception, all my friends at University were gay, in those intolerant days (only a few years after the Wolfenden report) when such a preference, such a nature, was often kept secret because still regarded by the majority of people as reprehensible and somehow 'perverse'. As for me, I simply enjoyed their company; their culture; their sensitivity; and which culture and sensitivity was, or seemed to me at the time, rather lacking in most if not all the other students I met, studied with, or had occasion to interact with.

### *Excursus - Galactic Imperium*

Since my discovery of National-Socialism, aged fifteen, I believed that NS Germany embodied the essence of - and could be archetype for - the type of warrior orientated and noble society that might make my vision of a Galactic Imperium real. I read everything I could about Hitler, NS Germany, and National-Socialism, and concluded - some time before what has been termed holocaust revisionism began - that the alleged extermination of the Jews



during the Second World War was propaganda.

To me, then, National-Socialism seemed to embody everything that I felt was noble and excellent: a new, modern, expression of the Hellenic ethos which I had greatly admired since first reading, in Greek, Homer's *Odyssey* and *The Iliad* years previously. Thus my overriding aim came to be supporting and propagating National-Socialism, and aiding organizations which might prepare the way for a new type of fascist or NS State.

Furthermore, I really had come to feel a deep love for my ancestral land of England as I felt then an idealistic, and honourable, desire to help, to aid, those whom I regarded as my own people: as if all their problems could and should be solved by the emergence of a National-Socialist State; as if all that was required for Paradise to be created on Earth was the triumph of an NS movement and the practical implementation of NS ideals. Youthful exuberance and naiveté - perhaps.

In my understanding of NS I was greatly helped by Colin Jordan, who suggested I read certain books, including the works of Savitri Devi, who gave me many books, and loaned me others, who patiently answered my many enthusiastic questions, and who introduced me to many life-long National-Socialists, including some who had fought for, and given their loyalty to, Adolf Hitler, and one of my most treasured possessions came to be a signed photograph given to me by Major-General Otto Ernst Remer.

Even before I discovered NS and studied NS Germany, I had a vision of a human Galactic Empire, founded and maintained by a new breed of warrior-explorers, as I believed that we human beings possessed great potential and can and should change and evolve ourselves, consciously, by acts of will, and by overcoming, by accepting, great and noble challenges. Such challenges would reveal ἀρετή - reveal a person's true nature, and be the breeding ground of ἀρετή.

Thus, for me, discovering and learning about NS seemed fortunate, wyrdful - presenting to me the means to make my vision real.

As I was to write during my time living in Leeds:

"It is the vision of a Galactic Empire which runs through my political life just as it is the quest to find and understand our human identity, and my own identity, and our relation to Nature, which runs through my personal and spiritual life, giving me the two aims which I consistently pursued since I was about thirteen years of age, regardless of where I was, what I was doing and how

I was described by others or even by myself..."

I further came to understand that in order to create the new warrior society, it was necessary to disrupt, undermine, destroy, overthrow – or replace by any practical means – all existing societies, and all governments, and that while electoral politics might be one way for National-Socialists to take power, direct revolution or insurrection was a viable alternative.

Therefore, with the dedication of a fanatic, I set about doing just that, ready, willing and prepared to use violence in order to aid and achieve political goals. For I then considered that sacrifices were necessary in order for these goals to be achieved, and that, once achieved, the violent struggle would have been worthwhile, even if it cost me my own life, or that of others. Thus, I placed some idealized vision of the future before my own personal happiness - indeed, my own happiness became the struggle for, and the practical realization of, that vision of the future.

### *Years of Ultra-Violence*

Fade back to the English city of Leeds, in the first few years of that decade - reckoned according to a calender still in common use - called the nineteen seventies.

I was released from my first term of imprisonment, having been convicted of leading a gang of skinheads in a Paki-bashing incident, following some racial skirmishes in Wakefield, and I soon settled back into my life as a violent street-agitator. I had found prison a useful and interesting experience, made some good contacts, learned some new skills, and left with more money than I had entered, having run a racket inside, selling certain liberated goods.

In the weeks following this, I put some of my new skills to practical use, and began to put together the nucleus of a small gang whose aim was to liberate goods, fence them, and make some money with the initial intent of aiding our political struggle.

Suffice to say that this gang - more petty criminals than racketeers - was based in or around Leeds and consisted of some useful people. For example, someone who worked in a large Department store, and someone employed by British Railways who had access to large parcels and rail freight. Thus, these types of people had easy access to useful, saleable, goods. The railway employees would simply change the labels and documentation, so that goods were mis-delivered to a contact, and then sold on to a fence, while the store

employees would arrange delivery of goods in a similar way, or one of our people would simply collect them in-store and boldly walk out with them.

For some reason I cannot quite now recall, Eddy Morrison became involved on the periphery of this group - perhaps he may have wanted a certain item, or two, which I, being his friend, said I could supply, etcetera.

For quite a while things ran smoothly - even when I happened to get arrested, convicted, and sent to prison (again) for a short while, for violence - until, one day in 1974, four or five Police officers from the then Yorkshire Regional Crime Squad (later to become part of the National Crime Squad), raided my garret in Leeds, and arrested me. Three other people in this small gang - including Morrison - were also arrested, and we were questioned for around six hours at the British Transport Police HQ in Leeds. Morrison and I were thrown into prison, "on remand", since it was feared that I would "intimidate witnesses" and that he was "my second in command" (which, unlike the first accusation, was not correct).

Having previously spent some time in Armley jail, being on-remand there did not bother me at all, and I soon settled back into prison life. Morrison, however, did not cope very well, and seemed genuinely surprised that I was rather enjoying myself. But, as I said somewhat humorously to one of the arresting Police officers, during one of my interrogations, "You get three meals a day, free accommodation, and there are lot's of friends around, so what's the big deal?"

It turned out that the Police had been "tipped-off" by one of those involved in this gang, because he had developed a personal grudge against me. The simple truth is that he had a violent argument with his girlfriend, she came to see me, and stayed for around two weeks.

There is an ineffable sadness  
For your eyes betray that warmth, that beauty,  
That brings me down  
To where even my street-hardened Will cannot go:  
So I am sad, almost crying

Outside, there is no sun to warm  
As yesterday when I touched the warmth of your breasts  
And the wordless joy of ecstatic youth  
Lived to suffuse if only briefly with world-defying life  
This tired battle-bruised body

But now: clouds, rain-bleakness  
To darken such dreams as break me.  
For there are many places I cannot go.

So I let her go, suffused as I still was with a particular political vision and various political schemes. To add insult to the injury of the grass who betrayed us, when he finally managed to see his former girlfriend again to try and get her back, she compared him unfavourably, in one department, to someone else. Thus, his pride hurt, he began telling lies about me to anyone who would listen, claiming, for instance, that once he pushed me up against a wall and I pleaded for him to let me go.

Quite naturally, given my character at that time, I while in prison arranged for someone to sort this grass out, but this comrade of mine, on his way to do just that, was pulled-over and arrested on some other outstanding matter, held on remand and eventually convicted of a variety of offences, receiving a long prison sentence. Meanwhile, the grass had left Leeds and gone into hiding.

On learning of this, I considered the matter, wyrdfully, finally concluding that I should – then and on my release from prison and for the good of the Cause – put my political aims and goals before personal vengeance and certain 'criminal' activities and running a gang. Thus, I should strive to be idealistic, noble, and ignore – not seek to find – such an individual, and instead personally concentrate on politics, eschewing further 'criminal' activities to fund that Cause. Not that – to be honest – this decision to concentrate solely on politics was easy for me then, since it was very tempting to continue with such activities, which I did enjoy: the planning, the anticipation, the execution, the camaraderie, and the satisfaction of succeeding.

When this particular criminal case against me finally came to trial, all the more serious charges had been dropped due to "lack of evidence", and I was simply charged with "receiving and handling stolen goods", for which I was convicted and given a bender.

Fade, back to my political life in Leeds. While all the above was occurring, I was dutifully doing my duty as a street-agitator, and had been recruited (by JM) into Column 88, a clandestine paramilitary and neo-nazi group, led by a former Special Forces officer, which at that time held regular military training sessions with the Territorial Army, the volunteer reserve force of the British Army. According to gen received decades later, Column 88 was actually part of NATO's pan-European underground Gladio network, set up and trained to employ guerilla tactics against the Soviets had they

ever invaded (as was still expected, in those days). But I knew nothing of this, at the time, and simply enjoyed being part of and training with Column 88. For C88 seemed to me to be a genuine National-Socialist group, devoted to comradeship and to the slow process of socially and politically infiltrating British society, with perhaps some possibility that, if the need arose (such as a Soviet invasion) we might "do our bit", as National-Socialists, and fight them.

Right from the very beginning it was obvious that C88 was a well-organized group, quite different from any other NS or nationalist group I had come across in the previous six years. For I had been instructed to wait in some obscure lay-by in Wiltshire, and was patiently doing so when several speeding vehicles arrived and proceeded - in an impressive manoeuvre - to surround, and block, the car I had been waiting in, with several very obviously fit young men exiting quickly from these vehicles.

I was further impressed when, later that day and in the house of C88's organizer (Lutz), I met many young National-Socialists from several different European countries. Here, I felt, was the spirit, the comradeship, of The Third Reich, of the Waffen-SS, of genuine National-Socialism, come alive again, something which, I knew from direct personal experience, was often so sadly lacking in the other NS group I had previously encountered.

While there was some military training - with weapons loaded with live ammunition - such as a night exercise in Savernake Forest when "we" had to take and overrun an "enemy" position, the real highlight for me of my years with C88 were the yearly Fuhrerfests when National-Socialists from all over Europe would gather in comradeship to celebrate Adolf Hitler's birthday. It was inspiring to know, to feel, that Adolf Hitler and his sacred mission had not been forgotten; that there were others - many others - in other lands who felt the same way and who understood, rationally or instinctively, or both, the essential goodness and nobility of National-Socialism itself. In addition, it was good to know that so many educated, seemingly well-connected, individuals in Britain were covert National-Socialists, for another impressive thing about C88 was its English members: professional, family, people, for the most part, who did not have a shaved head or a pair of 'bovver boots between them.

Indeed, I - although in some ways quite well educated - was probably the odd-one out: a rough almost fanatical street-fighter of many years experience who had been in Prison for violence and who had many other criminal convictions. That I, a hardened Nazi street thug with a criminal record, had been accepted into the home of L's wife and family - and into the homes of some other C88 members - was pleasing because it seemed to me to express

the nobility, the folk equality, of National-Socialism itself.

In 1973 - just before I was recruited by Column 88 - Colin Jordan invited me to his then home in Coventry. Naturally, having great respect for CJ, I accepted and was to find, on my arrival, that a meeting of the inner Council of CJ's British Movement was taking place. After a short wait, I was invited to address them, which I did, answered a few questions about tactics and strategy, and then had to wait for a while in another room, which CJ used as his office. Invited back, I was informed that they had decided to co-opt me onto the Council, something I had not expected. Asking for time to consider the matter, I left to travel back to Leeds. For reasons I cannot now quite recall, a few days later I wrote to CJ declining the offer - probably because I was already then thinking of forming my own, more violent, political organization.

In December of 1973, I finally managed to convince Morrison that we two, with our good ally Joe Short, should form a new political, more active (that is, more violent) and openly pro-Nazi, movement.

Thus the National Democratic Freedom Movement (NDFM) was born, which was to have a brief, if exceedingly violent, existence, with Morrison as leader. Our intent was to build a revolutionary street movement, and so for seven or so months we held public meetings, organized demonstrations and protests, and generally had a jolly good time (or at least, I did) in pursuit of gaining members and propagating National-Socialism under cover of nationalism.

As John Tyndall later wrote in his *Spearhead* magazine (April, 1983):

" The National Democratic Freedom Movement...concentrated its activities mainly upon acts of violence against its opponents. Before very long the NDFM had degenerated into nothing more than a criminal gang."

Among the highlights of that NDFM year, for me, were the following.

I smashed up (with one other NDFM member) an anti-apartheid exhibition, in Leeds (twice). I gave vitriolic extempore speeches at public meetings (some of which ended in violence when our opponents attacked). I waded into some Trade Union march or other, thumped a few people then stole and set fire to one of their banners (arrested, again). I arranged a meeting at Chapeltown, in Leeds (the heart of the Black community then) at which only five of us turned up, including Andrew Brons but not including Morrison. We faced a

rather angry crowd of several hundred people, who threw bricks, stones, whatever, at us, and we few walked calmly right through them to our parked vehicles, and rather sedately drove away, our point made. No one said we could do it.

I spoke extempore at Speakers Corner in Hyde Park for around a half an hour to a crowd of over a thousand (it ended in a brawl) - the only person from the extreme Right to speak there since the days of Oswald Mosley. At the brawl, one of our stewards was arrested, and - the fighting over - we regrouped to march toward Downing Street, after which we all went our separate way (I quite naturally went to see and stay the weekend with my lady friend in London).

Finally, toward the end of that Summer, a meeting we had arranged on Leeds Town Hall steps resulted in a mass brawl when the crowd of around a thousand attacked us, after I had harangued them for around half an hour. Several Police officers were injured as they tried to break up the fights. I was arrested (again) but soon was granted bail. Morrison became somewhat disillusioned, as I was by the attitude of many of those involved with the NDFM, and so I spent the time before my trial occupying myself with various travels around England and the NDFM simply slid into obscurity, a political failure - although, at least for me, it had proved to be an exceptionally valuable learning experience.

When my case came to trial, at Leeds Crown Court [3], I was accused of having "incited the crowd" and generally held responsible for most of the violence. I was found guilty of various so-called Public Order offences, and given several fines. What rather disgusted me after the trial was that several so-called comrades - including if my memory is correct, Morrison - having appeared at witnesses at the trial, collected between them witness expenses sufficient to pay my fines. But not one of them offered to do this, and I was not going to ask.

So, since I had no intention of paying the fines, I left Leeds.

### *Facies Abyssi*

For well over a year I evaded the consequences of not paying my fines, living as a vagrant, then in a caravan in the fenland. Writing poetry. Musing on life; reading the collected works of Jung and Toynbee; studying religions, including Buddhism. Listening to numinous music. And so on.

Crows calling while sheep cry  
By the road that shall take them  
To their death:

I sit, while sun lasts  
And bleeds my body dry  
In this last hour before dark  
On a day when a warm wind  
Carried the rain that washed  
A little of this valley  
Like the stream washes  
My rock:

There are no trees to soften  
This sun - only heather and fern  
To break the sides of the hill;  
I cannot keep this peace  
I have found -  
It seems unformed like water  
Becomes unformed without a vessel  
A channel or some stream:  
It cannot be contained  
As I contain my passion and my dreams.

There are no answers I can find  
Only the vessel of walks in hills  
Alone  
Whereby I who seek  
Am brought toward the magick peak  
That keeps this hidden world  
Alive

I even spent some time in a Buddhist monastery. But the Police eventually caught up with me, in my caravan, and I was arrested, and sent to prison (yet again). But this time for only six months.

My previous experiences of "being inside" were useful when I was sent back to prison. Luckily, I was assigned one of the best prison jobs, Library red-band (even though I was serving a short sentence), which job meant that I had a single "peter", that I took over a few rackets, and was left pretty much to my own devices in the library. One of the rackets revolved around goods smuggled in; another centred on porn magazines ordered by the nonces on Rule 43 and which magazines had a strange habit of disappearing or not being delivered or getting handed round other cons for a small fee; another racket involved goods being liberated from certain prison stores.



At that time, prison life was a delicate balance, so I occasionally helped out someone who also had some rackets (centred around gambling) by getting a few people to "carry" tins of tobacco for him. Overall, a reasonable time, which meant that my release date seemed to come around quite quickly.

On release from prison, I was undecided, for a while, about what I should do. I visited my lady friend in London, who by then had larger premises and a more select clientèle, and after travelling around for a while as an itinerant, I drifted back to live in Leeds. Morrison [4] had some minuscule and new political organization, was still talking the same rhetoric, and still unrealistically dreaming of obtaining political power in a decade or so. At least he was, outwardly, consistent.

As for me, for over five, often violent years, radical street politics had been an important part of my life - often, the most important part; and I had dedicated myself to the struggle, undeterred by prison. But my naivety, idealism, and optimism had all but faded away. For experience had revealed to me that the honour, loyalty and commitment to duty I expected from fellow political comrades was often absent, and that the leadership of all NS, all pro-NS groups and even all of our kind of nationalist organizations was woefully bad; un-charismatic and incapable of inspiring the loyalty required. Instead of idealism, loyalty and honour there were continual feuds, continued disloyalty, and little or no honour, manifest most often as this dishonour was in the spreading of malicious rumours behind people's backs.

My time away from Leeds - over a year, before my return to prison - had taken me back to those Fenland feelings of the late sixties. In particular, my solitary time as an itinerant had brought me close to Nature in very simple and unaffected way, so that there gradually arose in me a certain wordless feeling of dissatisfaction with modern life that had nothing whatsoever to do with my political beliefs, dreams or aspirations. In fact, nothing to do with any ideology, or, at that time, with any religion I had studied or personally experienced. Instead, it was interior, direct, personal - one individual, alone, who felt some relation with Nature, with the Cosmos, and it is true to say that this wordless feeling, and my memories of life close to Nature, rather haunted me when I returned to live in Leeds.

I just did not feel I belonged there, anymore. I yearned - for something; as one might yearn for a young lady seen briefly, spoken to briefly, whom one met on some travels, and whose presence, whose aura, whose scent, whose features, whose promise, lingered when she was gone; lingered so much, so numinously, that one regretted not running after her and blurting out some excuse to be with her, again. I yearned - for those intangible wistful moments

of a wandering life:

*Wine*

Stale  
I once drank you  
Knowing no difference because of herbs.  
She held me, her cunning hands  
That did not wish  
Nor offer the warmth that snared my soul:

The wine was  
Intoxicating our senses  
But only I was drunk:  
She laughed.

I needed rest  
Dreaming marriage under sun -  
Until bright morning came  
When she, alas, changed  
Her form in the reality of the room  
And I was left to walk with my sack  
Down the dusty track  
Past a grove of sun-burnt trees  
Toward those distant hills:

And yet the white-washed house was only  
One step  
Along my Way.

Perhaps it was that hot, dry, Summer of 1976 with its week after week of clear blue skies; perhaps it was some inner un-thought of satisfaction with my own subsuming political aims; some surfacing, some re-emergence, of that youthful desire to know, to understand, myself, Life, the Cosmos. Perhaps it was the feelings that gave rise to the many poems I had written in my wanderings; poems such as the compilation *Gentleman of the Roads*, and the poem *Clouds in the Sky*. Whatever the cause or causes, I found myself increasingly desiring to be alone; increasing desiring silence, both external and within; increasingly desiring to somehow in some way reconnect myself with that other older world that my political machinations and activities seemed to have almost totally obscured.

Two wyrdful things conspired together to seal my fate. The first was the

music of JS Bach, especially some Cantatas. The second was a strange encounter at an old Parish church on the edge of the fenland in King's Lynn.

The new female companion I had acquired on my return to Leeds shared my love of classical music, and I went to many concerts and performances with her. At one, during a performance of Bach's *Erbarme Dich*, I began to cry, silently: silent tears of unknowing, of sadness and of joy.

Not longer after, I ventured to return to visit a friend in Norfolk, and - somewhat early for the bus that would take me near his dwelling - I passed some time by perusing what seemed an interesting Church, having, at that time, a minor interest in architecture. Somewhat tired after a long journey, I sat for a while in some pew. Then this young man, in clerical garb, passed in front of the altar to briefly turn toward me, and smile. There was such gentleness, such purity, in his face, his demeanour. And then he was gone, out of my view, toward what I assumed, then, was some door. It was as if, in that moment, I knew he might have answers to some questions which I had been pondering for some days before, and so, instinctively, I rose to follow him only to find a solid wall where he had disappeared from my view, and it was only later, days later, that I discovered that once - centuries ago - there had indeed been a door there, and that the Church itself had been part of a medieval Priory.



He was so real; nothing in his appearance, his manner, to suggest a ghost, an apparition; and for weeks afterwards I tried convince myself that my tiredness, the unanswered questions in my head, had somehow in some way contrived to present me with some illusion, some delusion. But a vague feeling of unease remained - for there was that numinous face, that smile; that gentle presence radiating an inner contentment and a certain mystical peace.

My unanswered questions had to do with existence - with life - after our mortal death, and with the allegory of Jesus of Nazareth. An allegory I had

felt, touched, when a performance of Bach's Matthew Passion had surprised me, had impinged itself, not long before, upon my psyche, bringing once again from one momentous passage, those silent tears of my unknowing.

The truth I felt, the truth which thus became so revealed, was that I did not know; that I did not have all the answers; that I had begun to doubt everything that for years I had so passionately, even fanatically, believed in. The truth that maybe, just maybe, I might not be able to find all the answers by myself, unaided; that maybe, just maybe, there was someone out-there, or something, who and from which I might learn, who and which might guide me toward a deeper, a better, understanding of myself and this world. That maybe, just maybe, in that particular allegory I might find some answers.

Thus there arose slowly in me after these events some desire to know about a certain, a particular, a quiet and inner way of life which I felt might be able to provide me with some answers, which might in some way connect me - reconnect me - to a beautiful, purer, way of life.

For a long time I had, in pursuit of some ideology - what I would later describe as a causal abstraction - controlled an aspect of my character: my almost naive sensitivity, my empathy, my rather boyish enthusiasm. But now this aspect came again to live, on a daily basis, so that I, perhaps rather foolishly, took to walking the streets of Leeds barefoot, and smiling like some village idiot; so pleased, so very pleased, to be alive; so happy with the blueness of the sky, the warmth of the Sun, the ineffable beauty of life itself. As if I was detached from myself, not really some young man named Myatt but rather

A falling leaf turned Autumn brown  
Following the wind of the moment:  
Neither clinging to, nor striving against,  
The force of existence ever a dream in the end

For several weeks my plan became to return to an itinerant life, and thus became a kind of wandering poet, some sort of modern Taoist: a Way of Life familiar to me from my study of Taoism and my practical involvement with a Taoist Martial Art. But it seemed as if the wyrdful Cosmos had a rather different plan, for one day I decided - for reasons I cannot now recall - to borrow a bicycle belonging to a friend and head out for a week's holiday in the English countryside. A train conveyed me part of the way, and - the weather still hot, dry, and sunny - it was a pleasure to be away from the city, and I became as a schoolboy again for whom nearly every mile pedalled was an adventure.

There were stops for food, water - and a few overnight stays, often in some field beside some hedge. It did not matter, for I was still young, healthy, and quite strong.

After several days I came to be cycling down some narrow lane. To my left, a wooded hill of conifers; on my right, fields flowing gently upward to where a collocation of buildings were gathered just below a swathe of deciduous trees. The largest building somewhat - and I thought incongruously - resembled a French château, and so, intrigued, I cycled on to take a turning which I hoped might lead me toward it.

It was a monastery, and, leaving my bicycle propped up against a nearby tree, I wandered around. The door to the Abbey church was unlocked and I went inside. The cool quietness was slightly perfumed with incense from some recently ended Mass and a feeling of immense relief came over me as if I had, finally, come home. Words, scenes, emotions, scents, memories from a Catholic childhood lived within me once again, and it was so peaceful, so blissfully peaceful, sitting there, in the nave, that Time ceased to have any meaning or cause me any feeling as it trundled on in that other world, outside. Such stillness I had not thought possible came to keep me still.

I have no idea for how long I sat there, unthinking, and it was only when some activity in the monks choir beyond, behind, the altar distracted me that I remembered who and where I was. Then - their noonday prayer, chanted.

Suffice to say that when I returned to Leeds, soon afterwards, I immediately wrote to the Guestmaster of the monastery enquiring about a weekend visit. Some weeks later, I was there, at home, again. A weekend became a week; a certain request; an excited and nervous return to Leeds; and then that day when, with my few belongings, I ventured forth to begin my new life as a monk.

Sun, broken by branch, seeps  
Into mist  
Where spreading roots have cracked  
The stones, overgrown, perhaps,  
For an hundred years

From a seed, flesh fed, the oak  
Sheltering  
Mary  
Relict of William

And a breeze, stirring again  
This year  
The leaves of an Autumn's green gold

ooo

## **Part Two**

### **Sensus Internus**

#### *Into The Light*

Monastic life was, quite obviously, a complete contrast to the violence, the carnal indulgence, the political activity, the time spent in prison, of my previous years, and my first month in the monastery did not come as a surprise. I enjoyed it.

Like prison, there was a daily routine, and I soon adapted to it. Or, rather, I embraced it joyfully. Rising, in those years (I think they have gone a bit soft, now), at around half past four in the morning to - without breakfast - spend two hours and more in the monks' Choir stalls of the Abbey chanting Matins followed by Lauds and followed by Conventual Mass. The breakfast, in the refectory, was substantial. Then there was work, study, until past Noon, and Choir again for prayers before lunch, and at which meal one of the monks would read a religious text to us while we ate in silence, using a particular monastic sign language if for some reason we needed to communicate between ourselves, such as 'please pass me the butter'. An afternoon of manual labour followed, with a short break for cups of tea; more work or study until the hour of Vespers, sung in Latin, with the monks precessing from the cloisters, in cowled robes, into the Choir. Then the last meal of the day - supper - followed by an hour or so of "spiritual contemplation" and then onto the last prayers of the day, Compline. It was now not long after nine o'clock in the evening, and one was, quite understandably, somewhat tired, and so went to bed, in my case a cell (a small room with a small window) on the very top floor of the Abbey on what was called the Novices Gallery. Interestingly the only heating in these monastic cells - apart from the rooms of the Abbot and Prior, who had fireplaces - were hot water pipes running along the outside wall (no radiators). Of course, by the time the steam-generated hot water reached our pipes at the top, they were somewhat colder than in the rooms on the floors below.

Suffice to say, we were kept, busy, occupied, and I seemed to fit in quite well. It was also remarkably easy to forget about the outside world - and if something deemed really important happened in the outside world, one of the monks would pin a typed summary - a very small summary - of the event on the noticeboard in the cloister, which in practice meant once every month or so. Mostly though, the notices there were mainly about ecclesiastical matters - the Pope on a visit, somewhere; or a forthcoming visit to the monastery by some Bishop or other. A few of the monks were endearingly eccentric; for instance one had a fondness for eating - raw - the little mushrooms that occasionally sprouted, at certain times of year, on the lawn outside the calefactory window; another would - with the soles of his well-polished patent leather shoes - crunch a cockroach or two on the floor of the refectory before they could scamper away when we after hours of prayer went to eat our breakfast...

Weeks became months, and one of my jobs involved me working in the monastery library - a beautiful large place, of stone-mullioned windows (most of which did not open or had not been opened in decades), row upon row upon high row of dusty old books (many in Latin), large collections of manuscripts, and a quiet quietude that propelled one back into medieval times. It was as if the modern world - with its haste, its technology, its electricity - no longer existed, and, my allotted tasks accomplished, I could browse, and settle down to read. And if by some chance (and as occurred quite often) I came across something I could not understand - some passage in Latin, or Greek, for instance - there was always someone, some scholarly monk, who could not only explain it to me but also place it in context, and who more often than not was willing to discuss the matter in great detail.

The monastery provided me with many opportunities, to study, to learn, to discipline myself, to acquire a new perspective on life, and - for a while - I did believe I might have a vocation.

But after many months I became somewhat restless, and - obtaining permission to leave enclosure - I began running down the lane from the monastery toward the small wood-enclosed lakes about a mile and half distant. Not that I had "running shoes" or anything like that - only some old plimsolls obtained from The Dive. The Dive was in the basement of the monastery, run by one of the monks, and was where one might find some item one might need - a pair of sandals perhaps; or a shirt. Possibly even a tennis racket; an umbrella; or a hat if one was out in the Sun in the beautiful, secluded, wooded Monks Garden above the monastery, on the slope of a hill. Naturally, most if not all these Dive items were second, or third, or fourth hand, "donated" by monks, or their relatives, or someone else, and some items had been there - borrowed, and then returned, and sometimes repaired

- for perhaps a half a century or more. A veritable emporium, and if something one needed was not in The Dive - which was rare - it could be obtained, given some time.

This restlessness abated, a little, during those times I spent with four people there, three of them monks. The first was an older, jovial, monk, who possessed a great knowledge of Buddhism, especially Zen Buddhism, and who, in fact, had spent some years as Prior of a Zen monastery in Japan. We had many interesting discussions, about Buddhism, about Catholicism, about religion in general. The second person was a Greek scholar - a layman who lived in the monastery - and I seem to recall that he kept a card, filed among voluminous wooden card-indexes, for every single verse of The Odyssey, and which card contained, in his scholarly handwriting, the text in Greek, his translation, and some of his notes. The other two were younger monks - older than and senior, in monastic terms, to me - who had an interest in the more arcane aspects of religion, and especially of Catholicism, and we three would spend hours upon hours discussing mysticism, esotericism, and religion in general, even though, according to certain monastic rules, I should not have been associating with them as much as I did.

One rather humorous incident during my time in the monastery is worth recounting. I was asked, by the Abbot, to spend some weeks in Dublin where some University research project was underway, funded (I believe) by several monasteries, into vocations: what motivated young men to become monks; what might the monasteries do to attract more vocations, and so on. Why I - with my past - had been chosen to take part I found somewhat strange; or, perhaps, I had been chosen because of my past, a past known in full to both the Novice Master and the Prior. Whatever the reason, it meant flying from the nearest airport to Dublin, staying in a Presbytery near Phoenix Park and attending the University every day.

So, there I am, at the airport in England, travelling under my real name [5], waiting with other passengers in the departure lounge to board the aeroplane, when I am taken away, by two Special Branch Police officers, to be "interviewed" in a nearby room. Obviously they - or some other official - had recognized my name, or I was on some official Special Branch watch list. They asked why I was going to Dublin - and I explained where I was living, and why, and that the Abbot had selected me to take part in some research at the University. One of the Police officers then said that they would "check out my story" - and he duly returned, not long afterwards, and said I could go.



It was only on my return to the monastery, over two weeks later, that I learnt what had occurred. The Police officer had telephoned the monastery and enquired if there was a certain DM who lived there and what he was doing. One of the older monks happened to answer the telephone, and - in his schoolmasterish way, as though lecturing a schoolboy - confirmed my story, making some remark to the effect that he would be happy to ask the Abbott to telephone the Chief Constable, at which point, as he with great amusement later recounted to me, the Police officer said, somewhat sheepishly, that no, that would not be necessary.

Fundamentally, however, although I generally - most days - enjoyed the life immensely, three things surfaced to unsettle me, more and more, even though for quite some time I fought against them, strengthened as I was by certain numinous aspects of monastic life. For example, by the office of Compline and the singing of the beautiful Latin *Salve Regina* after which most of the monks, myself included, would go the kneel in silent reverential prayer on the bare stone floor in front of a centuries-old statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For example, the short contemplative time between Matins and Lauds when it was peaceful, so blissfully peaceful, to wander outside in the darksome quiet or just sit still in the Choir and sense the centuries of numinous longing, joy and hope, that had seeped forth in prayer from places such as this.

The first - and for me perhaps the most important - of these three unsettling things was that I missed women. I missed everything about them - carnal relations, naturally, but also their presence, their touch, their embrace, their scent, their sensitivity, their gentleness, that intimate often wordless sharing that arises from a passionate, lustful, sharing relationship. In brief, I missed - and desired - the essence of women. Or at least, the essence of a certain type of women that I had become familiar with: the empathic, cultured, refined, well-mannered, passionate lady with whom and through whom one could be part of and explore a numinous reality.

The second was my combative nature - I loved to dispute, to argue, and many of the noviciate lectures degenerated into discussions between me and the senior monk trying to instruct we few novices. I argued about and disputed what the other novices thought were the most trivial things - for instance the exact meaning of certain words, and one discussion, in our course on New Testament Greek, about the meaning of the word *λόγος*, went on for hours. Eventually, in a rather nice way, I was told I was being somewhat disruptive, but my good, my expected, monastic behaviour did not last for long.

The third was my lack of obedience and humility. For instance, I had been

informed, by the Novice Master and then the Prior that I should no longer spend time with the two more senior monks with whom I had developed a friendship and with whom I discussed all manner of arcane matters. Although I agreed to abide "by the rules" it was not long before I broke them, again.

My rather un-monastic attitude was not helped when I pinned the following on the cloister noticeboard:

And Jesus said unto his disciples - "And who do you say that I am?"

And they replied - " You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the kerygma in which we find the ultimate meaning of our interpersonal relationships. "

And Jesus looked at them amazed, and said, "*You what?*"

I cannot now remember where I obtained this quote from - some newly published book, perhaps - but my attempt at humour was somewhat unappreciated. My excuse? It had been suggested that we novices read Barth's *Church Dogmatics*.

Another incident - revealing of my nature - is perhaps worth recalling. An elderly monk died, peacefully, in his room, and on hearing this I rushed along the cloister to ring "the big bell", for I remembered having read somewhere (perhaps in the Rule of Saint Benedict) that what is what one should do, thus enabling the monks to pray for the soul of our departed brother. Naturally, I got into trouble for doing this - the bell could be heard for miles - for apparently this was, in that monastery, no longer the custom, and I should, of course, have asked permission first. Also, naturally, I argued the point - for a while, at least.

It was not that I made some sudden decision to leave. Rather, it became - after nearly a year and a half - rather obvious to me that I really did not have a vocation, a sentiment subsequently shared by both the Abbot and the Novice Master. Thus, by mutual consent, I eventually left, to return to live, for a while, in a caravan in the Fens.

The most poignant, the most remembered, thing about my leaving was when I went to tell the monk who had been a Zen Master, who said that of all the novices he had known in the past few years, I was the most monastic of them all. "This place needs people like you..." he said. But he was, to be fair, something of a character, himself, and had a wicked sense of humour.

## *Wandering, Love, and Marriage*

During my last few months in the monastery, one of my given tasks had been to care for, to nurse, an elderly monk with a terminal disease, and - to my great surprise - the Abbot had occasion to thank me, several times, in person, for my work. Even so, he surprised me yet again by suggesting, on the day before my departure, that I should consider a career as a Nurse. Which I duly did and - with his letter of recommendation - managed to secure a place as a student Nurse. The start of the training course, however, was many months away, and so, for a while, I wandered around, once again, as an itinerant.

This wandering gave me time to reflect upon many things - especially my monastic life - and one thing I began to appreciate in a more conscious way was the centuries-long still living culture to which I belonged, of which Catholicism, monasticism, and Christianity in general, had been a part. For me, this was, and had been, especially manifest in two things: in plainchant (which I loved to sing and to listen to), and in classical music from medieval times to JS Bach, Haydn, and beyond, and a lot of which music - especially JS Bach and Haydn - was imbued with or inspired by a religious feeling, an appreciation and a knowing of the numinous.

This reflexion placed many things into a supra-personal perspective so that, for instance, I began to consider certain philosophical and ethical questions, including the nature of human love and human suffering, and the ethics of politics. During my time in the monastery I rarely thought about politics - or even about the world outside - and certainly did not miss political activity or involvement. I was far too occupied with daily monastic life and with my own studies, which included ancient Greek literature, Buddhism, Taoism and Western philosophy. These reflexions in turn led me to consider the nature and form of religion, especially in relation to Christian history and theology.

Thus my life became, for around three years after I had left the monastery, personal - for there was no involvements with politics, or even with any organized form of religion, Catholic or otherwise. I had no rôle, no aim beyond pursuing my interests - such as running, cycling and classical music - and was even gainfully employed, for a year, at least.

For my nursing course had started. In those days, the training was mostly practical, on the hospital wards, with a three month assignment on a certain type of ward (medical, surgical, and so on) followed by a few weeks back in the classroom, followed by another duty on another ward.

Sitting quietly in high Summer  
While the river flows  
Is peaceful, for an hour;  
But any longer, and we who wish  
Cannot wait to abstain:  
We must be gone or find a goal  
To satisfy such haste.

There was a man, dying from his age  
As his flesh and organs failed:  
He did not seem to mind this  
    I've had a good innings  
Except, sometimes, the pain.  
He would lay, slowing breathing  
And sometimes smiling in his bed  
While we who waited on the living  
And the dying  
Cared  
As our time, tiredness and allocations  
Allowed.

Every two hours, on the Ward, still living bodies  
Would be turned  
To remove just one more soiled sheet  
While the heat of Summer through half-open  
Windows  
Mingled with the smells  
And the oozing from freshly sutured  
Flesh:

But each dark moment was almost always  
(If you watched)  
Relieved  
By the sadness or the smile  
In another person's eyes.

And there was a learning  
In such simple glimpses,  
Shared.

I was one of only two male nurses on the course, and while the work itself  
was quite tiring and hard - and one went through periods of loving it, hating  
it, loving it - it was rewarding, and there was a sense, in those days, of

belonging to a small community, especially since I lived, in a minuscule room, in the Nurses Home. One lived and worked in the same place, and generally spent time off-duty with one's fellow student nurses, in one's own year or from other years.

Naturally, there were liaisons with people with whom one worked and who also lived within the hospital grounds, and after a few of these I found myself in a serious relationship. There were plans for us to obtain our own accommodation, near the hospital; short holidays, away; and I felt I was in love. The young lady in question certainly was in love with me. But then, as my first year moved toward its ending, I - stupidly, selfishly, dishonourably - ruined it all, by falling in love with someone else.

The "other woman" was a friend of a friend, and then a Post Graduate studying at Cambridge, whom I met at some party or other in that city. Her nickname was Twinkle, and there was a quite adorable child-like quality to her, a need to be loved, an enthusiasm tempered occasionally by a touch of anxiety, all of which, combined with a keen intellect and a love of classical music, poetry and English literature, made her (at least to me) irresistible. I did try to resist - for a while. For several months, I managed to behave honourably, and even managed to behave in a friendly way toward her then lover. But the more I saw of her, the worse I felt.

For weeks, I resisted the temptation to see her, and was glad when she moved away, her course over, to live and work in what seemed far off Shropshire. But then her fateful short note arrived in the post - "Feeling wretched. Do come!" it read, giving a telephone number and an address. The very next day another, quite similar, note arrived, sounding even more urgent.

Making excuses to K - for I was genuinely concerned Twinkle might harm herself - I set off, without any expectations and rather naively believing I could be a good friend. A train to Shrewsbury; a bus to that overgrown village where she lived where once there was a medieval Priory; and there she was, waiting for me at the bus stop. Alighting from the bus, she ran to embrace me, and clung onto me for what seemed, what felt, a long time. "I wish I had a camera!" an elderly lady, waiting at the stop said, and smiled. And then we were walking, rather shyly together, along the road to her lodgings.

Hours later, the evening meal she had cooked eaten, we sat - she on a chair, I on the carpet before the gas fire - in her room in the candlelit dark while she, to a mute background of a symphony by Brahms - tearfully recalled the last few weeks of her life. Her lover had spurned her, harshly, for someone else;

she felt so alone; so betrayed; so ashamed of herself; so disgusted with herself for being so weak and needy, believing she was unworthy of being loved...

What could I say? Do? I should have played the rôle of unworldly, detached, Sage, and spake forth some words of fatherly wisdom and advice - but all I did in my weakness was move toward her, hold her hand and told her that I loved her. Thus did I that night and the next betray my lover. K met me at the railway station on my return, and she knew, just knew, immediately, of my betrayal, just as I felt her knowing. We did not speak of it then, and strived to carry on as normal, until some days later when a letter for me from Twinkle arrived. I was on duty, and K opened and read it. There were no tears from her on my return to my room in the Nurses Home; no words shouted; no words at all. She simply gave me the letter and waited. There was, in that letter, a declaration of love, a passage about having children - about how even now she might be bearing "our child".

There were tears from she whom I had betrayed, and I felt ashamed, and the most wretched I had ever, up until then, felt in my life. Wretched because of her sadness, her feelings; wretched because I had so deeply hurt her; and wretched because there was no anger in her, no words or shouts of recrimination; no accusations; no flailing fists of a lover betrayed. Only deep soul-wrenching almost utter despair. She left then to leave me alone with my dishonour, my shame.

A few days later, I suddenly withdrew from the nursing course to travel to Shropshire to live with my new lover. The day before I left I had met K, briefly - or rather, she had saught me out. We embraced, then she pulled away to affect a smile while I just stood there, not knowing, in my shame, what to say or do. But she was far stronger than I and suggested, gently, affectionately, that - if I did indeed love Twinkle - then I could obtain a transfer to a hospital in Shropshire. She had it all worked out, having even spoken to a senior member of the teaching staff about such transfers. She left then, leaving me as if I had just awoken from some dream. A walk. Another walk. A telephone call some hours later; a question impetuously asked; an affirmative answer received. Yes, she would marry me...

I went to tell K. She had just returned from a late shift and, then as now, I am not quite sure how or why we parted in the gentle way we did. We spoke for a while, softly, of our own future separate plans; we shared a bottle of wine; then we were in each others arms; and in the morning we kissed and I, with no words exchanged between us, left to begin my new life in the rural county of Shropshire. Less than six months later I was married, to Twinkle, and never saw or heard from K again.

Now, recalling those events, I feel that K perhaps loved me far more than I deserved, as I know I behaved dishonourably and assuredly hurt her deeply. There are no excuses for my behaviour, then; I was quite simply - and for all my idealistic talk of honour in my political years - just weak, dishonourable. I gave in to my dreams and my desires, placing my needs, my dreams, my hopes, my lust, before the feelings of someone who loved me and whom I should have treated in an honourable way. In brief, I was selfish, and really did not know what love was - what it meant and implied - despite all my philosophical reflexion on the matter and despite all my previous trysts and involvements.

A few weeks before my marriage, I went to visit my lady friend in London for the last time to inform her of my change of circumstances, and spent an exquisitely poignant weekend with her; feelings recalled some months later in bleak mid-Winter:

Like memories, snow falls  
With no sound  
While I stand as Winter frosts  
My feet  
And a cold hand holds itself ready  
Near a pen:

The birds, though starving, still sing  
Here where trees and snow seat themselves  
On hill  
And the slight breeze beings to break  
My piece of silence  
Down.

Her love seemed only real  
With its loss.

Above the trees, crows cawing  
As they swirl  
Within the cold

### *A Shropshire Tale*

The seven years of my first marriage were all spent in South Shropshire, that rural part of that border English county that I came to love. For a few months, after our marriage, we lived in lodgings and then in a caravan on the

edge of a field on a farm, and enjoyed a reasonably happy time, until the snows of Winter came. I liked living in the quiet solitude of the caravan with its wood-burning stove, while she did not.



High Acre in Shropshire (from a painting by Richard Moulton)

One morning we awoke to find ourselves snowed in, and I had to crawl out of a caravan window to shovel snow away from the door so that she could decamp to the nearby shack, whose rotting wooden roof and walls provided some shelter and which enclosed our portable chemical toilet. She had, quite naturally, endured enough, and threatened that day to stay with friends whose central heating, indoor bathroom, and kitchen she somehow found enchanting, suggesting then that we immediately find somewhere else suitable for us to live.

After a while we did, a brief interlude of living in Shrewsbury town not really worth recalling. We found a glorious house on the edge of the Long Mynd overlooking the Stretton valley, and it was there - with Coalbrookdale fireplaces in almost every room - that we would spend most of our remaining married years together.

The years passed - or seemed to pass, for me - quite quickly. I, occupied with cycling, with daily runs on the Long Mynd, writing poetry, with researching and writing a book I called, somewhat pretentiously, *The Logic of History* [6], and sometimes with work; she occupied with her full-time employment, miles distant (she possessed a moped) and her small circle of friends.



Work, for me, like money, was incidental, while for her, her career was the main enthusiasm of her life, and something she did with excellence and élan, and a consummate and professional ease. Thus, we existed quite often in our separate worlds, our married life more a convenience than a sharing passion, a fault for which I alone was to blame.

For instance, for me, weekends were a time for long fifteen or twenty mile runs - or fifty to eighty mile cycle rides, or competing in bicycle Time Trials at club level [7] - with the remainder of the day spent relaxing, perhaps idly walking up the Burway, or listening to music. In contrast, she desired a rather more active social life, and on the few occasions I accepted some social invitation - an evening meal with some of her colleagues, for instance - I either, in my then still somewhat arrogant way, monopolized the conversation, or was disdainful and disinterested.

Thus, as might be gathered from this précis, I was rather selfish if not downright uncaring, although I did agree, much against my own desire, to her wish to delay having children, given her commitment to her career. It is perhaps not surprising that she, therefore, with her passionate needful nature sought to find a type of love elsewhere. Thus it was that she fell in love with another woman. Or rather, we both were attracted to the same married woman, except, for my wife, while a physical desire existed, she honourably did not act upon it, while I - yet again - allowed my desire to overwhelm me, and thus betrayed her.

Had I learned nothing from the torment, the grief, the sorrow, of only a few years ago? From my other act of dishonour? Yes - but only for a while. Yet again, there are no excuses for my failure. But, aged a few years past thirty, it would be the last time I allowed lust to overwhelm my honour.

Our marriage survived, for a while at least. She, though deeply hurt, forgave me in that loving way that many women often can. But, unsurprisingly, and correctly, she began to find fault with me, our marriage, aided by a loving, tender, relationship she developed with a younger woman. A year later we separated, and then divorced - she to live in a University city with her young lover, and I to stay in Shropshire.

During the years of my first marriage, I remained inactive in practical street politics, although I did keep in touch with both CJ and John Tyndall, and wrote a few articles, which JT published in his *Spearhead* magazine, both under my own name, and under several pseudonyms. [8]

For a few years, after my marriage, I worked in a few different

occupations - or none, since by then I had a small private income - travelled [9], and enjoyed various liaisons with women, none of which lasted for very long and several of which placed me on the other side of betrayal, which in itself proved to be valuable, if painful, personal learning experience:

A bright quarter moon  
As I ran alone in the cold hours  
Along the sunken road that twists  
Between hill-valley and stream:

There was a dream, in the night  
That woke me - a sadness  
To make me sit by the fire  
Then take me out, moon-seeing  
And running, to hear only my feet  
My breath - to smell only the coldness  
Of the still, silent air:

But no spell, no wish  
Brought my distant lover to me  
And I was left to run slowly  
Back  
And wait the long hours  
To Dawn.

By the fire, I think of nothing  
Except the warmth of my love  
No longer needed.

Then, one day - and arranged through a mutual acquaintance - I had an assignation with another women. Reverting back to country type, I wore a tweed suit, my tweed overcoat, plus traditional English flat cap. We had arranged to meet outside a Wine Bar in Shrewsbury, and, as her close friend, A, was later to tell me in a letter, Sue immediately fell in love with me:

" When Sue first met you, I've never seen such instant love and attraction. I've never believed in love at first sight but I have to admit you and Sue seem to have been the exception that proved the rule..."

That evening we had a long leisurely meal in that Wine Bar, and had a quite marvellous time, for there was a lovely, and natural, affinity between us. We arranged to meet the following week, became lovers, and then began living together.

Quite simply, I adored her and fell deeply in love with her. She was practical

(she designed and made many of her own clothes), uncomplicated, and we just fitted together exceptionally well, never arguing, and never even - not once - exchanging angry words.

As her friend, A, wrote in the aforementioned letter:

" She had a very deep and simple love for you which never wavered. You and Sue were privileged to have that kind of love..."

We shared everything; went everywhere together, including holidays abroad. Indeed, twice every year we travelled to Egypt, once to spend two weeks leisurely cruising down the Nile from Aswan to Cairo, one of the last of those two week trips, then, since Middle Egypt, around troubled Assyut, became closed to Nile cruise boats, following some attacks on Western tourists. Indeed, I can remember, on that particular trip, that armed Policemen accompanied our boat for part of our journey, as we were often escorted, on some excursions, by other armed guards.

My life became settled, and I was immensely happy. I began translating ancient Greek literature: first, *Antigone* by Sophocles, followed by *Oedipus Tyrannus*.

Then, just over four years into our relationship, Sue became ill. She had developed cancer. Surgery, and radiotherapy followed, and she seemed to recover, so we went again to Egypt. We had just returned when she became quite ill, and required emergency admission into hospital.

There we were, in an isolation room - it was feared, because of her yellow-coloured eyes, that she might have hepatitis or have acquired some tropical disease - awaiting the results of various tests.

"I am so sorry," the quite young hospital Consultant informed us, "it is very serious..."

She had around six weeks to live. Her first words to me after he, a lovely sensitive man, had left: "I am glad we went to Egypt." Then she smiled: "At least I'll have time to sort everything out!"

Never once, during those few remaining weeks of her life did she complain, even though she was on quite a high dose of morphine for her pain. Never once was she sad, dejected. Instead, it was she who - unbelievably - gave me strength and support. She was, in a quite literal way, remarkable. We stayed, for a week, with her mother and brother who, having the means, spent every

Autumn and Winter in Spain in a house overlooking the Mediterranean sea [10]. Then, her health deteriorating, we left to return to England.

One incident, at Malaga airport, enraged me. She was by then in a wheelchair, and we had requested priority boarding which the airline had agreed to. As I pushed her in her wheelchair I heard one British woman, in the departure lounge, make a disgusting remark, doubting whether "that woman" really needed a wheelchair. Enraged, I was about to shout something vulgar in reply when Sue gently smiled, held my hand, and shook her head. She died just over a week later, one night in her sleep while I sat beside her.



Sue, On Wenlock Edge

For months afterwards I shut myself away, at first in a room at an hotel in Shropshire, and then in a chalet in the hotel grounds. I busied myself with completing my translation of *The Agamemnon* by Aeschylus and going for walks on the Long Mynd.

Translation, and those walks, became my life. I had no other aim and three months became many more. I do not now recall how many months I stayed there, reclusive in my world, but however long it was I endured until my translation was complete. I even took the radical step - on a few occasions when busy weekends were expected - of hiring the two chalets on either side of mine in order to be alone, at peace, as I had my own table in the hotel restaurant, set well away from the others.

The translation over, I found myself - or so I believed - almost recovered from the immediacy of her loss. Sue, organized, remarkable, to the end, had planned her leaving well, and one of the few things she insisted upon, in those final weeks, was that I should, must, have a life after her. So she had a friend find an exclusive agency that specialized in personal introductions, and their card was in that leather Filofax that Sue had given me as one of her departing gifts. For weeks, I ignored that card, making a whole variety of excuses. Then, remembering, and placing my pride aside for her sake, and using one of those new-fangled mobile telephones, I made a call. Suffice to say - some interviews over, one at the village home of one of the ladies who ran the agency - I was offered an introduction.

I arranged to meet J at the Feathers Hotel in Ludlow, and she, as I, was nervous. She was well-dressed, well-spoken, well-educated, and somewhat reminded me of the archetypal English Rose. We arranged another meeting, and then another, and so began a rather old-fashioned courtship, which pleased us both, and it was not long before I fell in love with her. Years later, she confided in me that she began to fall in love with me on what was our second assignation when, in Worcester, after an evening meal at a fine restaurant, I was, as a gentleman should, escorting her to where her car was parked when I, like some schoolboy, unthinkingly blurted out, having taken out my pocket watch: "Gosh! It's half past nine already! I haven't been up this late for absolutely ages..."

Thus, there came a time when it seemed apposite for me to propose marriage. So I invited her to spend a long weekend with me at a rather lovely hotel beside a lake in Wales where, rather nervously, I revealed everything about my past. A few months later we were married, and honeymooned in the Maldives.

### *Combat 18 and the NSM*

Life was never simple again, after that. For I had returned to writing about National-Socialism, publishing my fourteen volume *National-Socialist Series*, which included works with titles such as *National-Socialism: Principles and Ideals*, and *The Revolutionary Holy War of National-Socialism*.

Why this return? To be honest, I cannot really remember. But I have more than a vague suspicion that Sue's death had affected me more than I, at

the time, cared or even dared to admit. Something seemed to have departed from my life: a personal vision, a dream, perhaps, of us - of Sue and I - growing old together; of a life of contented sharing, where the world was only our life together. For we had a beautiful life and home - a detached house, in Shropshire, tastefully furnished by Sue (who had impeccable taste); I had a collection of five custom made bicycles (including two with frames hand-crafted by Mercian); we had relaxing enjoyable holidays several times a year; our relationship was everything I had ever dreamed about; we had no financial concerns; and we were totally loyal to each other. I was, quite simply, in love and content, as I knew she was.

So, perhaps I replaced my personal vision with another one, retreating back into the world I had known before. The world of NS politics; of striving to create a better world, for others, based on the values of honour, loyalty and duty. In some ways, these NS writings of mine were an attempt to not only express the essence of what I believed National-Socialism to be, but also to evolve it, and I began to circulate a small newsletter, *The National-Socialist*, in the hope of introducing these ideas of mine to others.

It was around this time that the London-based group Combat 18 was becoming well-known, and it seemed to me that many of those involved with this group were doing what I had again, and at that time, come to believe was necessary, which was revolutionary street-action in the name of National-Socialism, just as I believed then, as before, that I, by supporting NS, was doing something honourable and noble.

As I wrote in a previous autobiographical note, published in 1998:

I came to admire them and openly declared my support for them. I also gave a personal pledge of loyalty to Combat 18's leader, Charlie Sargent, and his brother, Steve.

In a short space of time Combat 18 had built up a fearsome reputation and done what no other group had done - gained street power from those opposed to National-Socialism. Not surprisingly, the Press, aided by MI5, began a campaign to discredit C18, as both MI5 and Special Branch sought to infiltrate and disrupt the organization.

In article after article, in letter after letter, in discussion after discussion, I warned of the danger and urged people to uphold the values of honour, loyalty and duty. I also urged them to consider that the best way forward was a proper National-Socialist organization and to forget plans and talk of an imminent armed insurrection, for - as I had discovered from practical experience -

the time was not yet right for such plans: we needed the people first, properly motivated, in their thousands, and we had but dozens. But the poison of the State took effect. People in nationalist organizations began to believe the clever MI5 dis-information about C18 being a MI5 run group, created to disrupt the so-called 'nationalist cause'. Some nationalists even went so far as to describe Charlie and Steve as 'informers'. Perhaps MI5 were also successful in disrupting C18 itself, or perhaps it was only the result of the ego and disloyalty of one individual.

Whatever the first cause, open feuding broke out between the two C18 factions, resulting in one death, and the arrest for murder of Charlie Sargent and his loyal comrade Martin Cross. I was honour-bound to stay loyal to Charlie Sargent, and decided to form and lead the National-Socialist Movement to continue the work he had begun. As a result, a smear campaign against me began. Rumours of Occult involvement - never entirely absent thanks to a few dishonourable and cowardly individuals - increased. But I believed I could ignore them as I hoped others around me would ignore them and hold fast to honour, loyalty and duty.

The decision for me to come back into public prominence by forming and leading the NSM was easy, even though I knew what would happen with regard to rumours about me, and even though I never intended to stay for long as the leader, lacking as I did the qualities of leadership. Yet, secretly, in my heart, I yearned for a quiet rural life, working on a farm and undertaking Greek translations in my spare time.

However, the decision to form and lead the NSM was easy because I felt it was my duty - I believed I was responsible for what had happened to Charlie as I believed that someone had to publicly support him. I was responsible because in truth I - the exponent of honour, loyalty and duty - should have done something to prevent the situation that arose. I should have tried to bring the factions together on the basis of duty to the Cause first and foremost. I even went to Charlie's committal proceedings, after he had been charged with murder, in the belief that matters could even at that late date be sorted out. For I had a somewhat naive belief that the opponents of Charlie would see reason, ignore MI5 dis-information, and agree to put loyalty and the Cause first.

But the more I found out about what had happened, and was happening, the more I knew there could be no compromise with those who had betrayed Charlie, particularly by giving evidence

against him in Court. This betrayal by giving evidence in a Court of Law was totally unacceptable behaviour - totally dishonourable. For we National-Socialists regarded the State and its Institutions such as the Police as our enemies, as we believed we should settle any disputes among ourselves in our traditional warrior way through a fair fight or a duel. Moreover these people continued parroting MI5 dis-information, and accused both Charlie and Steve of being informers when the truth was that the leader of their faction was the biggest informer of all, helping as he did to convict Charlie and Martin and supporting as he did the State and its dishonourable laws. Twice we who were loyal to Charlie waited for this informer and his supporters to turn up to sort matters out with a fair fight, once at Chelmsford and once in north London - and twice they did not turn up. [11]

My involvement with Combat 18, and later the new NSM, was to have a deleterious affect on my marriage, especially as my wife did not share my political opinions. *Searchlight* devoted several pages of one issue of their magazine to me, complete with photographs, including one of me on the front cover, under the headline *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*. As usual, their story was a mix of some truth, some lies, and some unproven allegations. That is, it was political propaganda, designed for a specific purpose. In another issue, dealing with the trial of Charlie Sargent, there was a photograph of me (perhaps it was on the first page, if my ageing memory is correct) walking toward the Court in Chelmsford beside the wife of Martin Cross.

This photograph - together with my many trips to London - made my wife suspicious and so we argued, at first about "other women," and then, gradually, about other matters. On one occasion I had to go to Northern Ireland, and she insisted that I telephoned her from there, which I did, as she insisted on calling me back to check the number so that she knew I was there and not somewhere else. But, during the whole of our relationship I was never disloyal to her, having learnt that lesson, at least.

Meanwhile, I took to working on a farm, near to where we then lived in a detached house in a village not far from Malvern, and it was at that house that one local Policeman, accompanied by six Detectives from SO12, Scotland Yard, came to call, early one morning in 1998, to arrest me. For nearly seven hours they searched the house, seizing my computers, files, and letters, and arrested me. I was taken to Malvern Police Station, whose officers seemed somewhat bemused by this invasion of Detectives from an



elite unit based at Scotland Yard.

A few interrogations, a period locked in a cell, and many hours later, I was released, on condition that I reported on a regular basis to Charing Cross Police station in London. I made a point, during my first "interview", of thanking the Detectives for their professional behaviour during their search of my home - for they had indeed acted in a very professional and courteous manner toward us - and it was this, and my subsequent interviews with SO12 officers in London (and on one occasion, in Oxford) - and the professional attitude of the custody Sergeants and other Police officers I had occasion to then interact with - that made me revise my attitude toward the Police.

My wife seemed, somewhat strangely, to take this invasion of her home, and my arrest, quite calmly, and did not seem particularly perturbed when I would adhere to my bail conditions and travel to London. I, certainly, was unperturbed - although my trips to London, the reaction of many comrades to "the dawn raids", and the attitude of the Police officers involved, did lead me to begin to think seriously again about the tactics, and indeed the rather stark ideology, I had been pursuing.

For, for all my rhetoric, for all my revolutionary words, for all my personal effort and sacrifice, very little - if anything - of practical import had been achieved. Indeed, the situation within and exterior to the NSM, and what remained of Combat 18, was analogous to the NDFM; in truth, it was far far worse. There seemed to be little honour; even less genuine loyalty; and the usual spreading of malicious rumours and of gossip. Furthermore, few people - if any - were prepared to risk their lives or their liberty for the Cause they claimed they believed in.

Hard manual work, on the farm, was some recompense, and I seriously began to wonder why I bothered with practical politics at all. But, outwardly, I maintained my revolutionary persona - at least for some months. For a new strategy had occurred to me, and this was that a religion might be very useful, or at least some kind of religious approach. Previously, I had rather vaguely written about NS as some kind of religion - but no one was interested, and it was, I knew, impossible to intellectually conjure a new religion into existence.

Thus, and impressed as I was at the time by the actions of devout Muslims who were, or who seemed to be, prepared to sacrifice their lives for "their Cause", I began to seriously study Islam, initially more to see what I could learn from it and perhaps apply to that NS Cause I then still believed in.

ooo

## **Pathei-Mathos**

### *Copeland, The Way of Al-Islam, and A New Beginning*

During my time with Combat 18, I had returned to Egypt, and it was during this visit that I began to appreciate the difference between Arab nationalism, and Islam, for I talked to several Egyptians, and several Muslims, about their land, about Islam, about life in general. I liked the manners of these Muslims, their devotion to their faith, which included praying five times a day.

I returned to England to find bad-manners, arrogance, materialism, decadence, and for the first time in my life I felt somewhat out of place among my own people. But gradually, over the coming months, the feeling faded.

As I wrote in Part Six of *Ethos of Extremism*:

" There was no sudden decision to convert to Islam [in 1998]. Rather, it was the culmination of a process that began a decade earlier with travels in the Sahara Desert. During the decade before my conversion I regularly travelled abroad, with this travel including well-over a dozen visits to Egypt and a few visits to other lands where the majority of the population were Muslim.

Egypt, especially, enchanted me; and not because of the profundity of ancient monuments. Rather because of the people, their culture, and the land itself. How life, outside of Cairo, seemed to mostly cling to the Nile - small settlements, patches and strips of verdancy, beside the flowing water and hemmed in by dry desert. I loved the silence, the solitude, the heat, of the desert; the feeling of

there being precariously balanced between life and death, dependant on carried water, food; the feeling of smallness, a minute and fragile speck of life; the vast panorama of sky. There was a purity there, human life in its essence, and it was so easy, so very easy, to feel in such a stark environment that there was, must be, a God, a Creator, who could decide if one lived or died.

Once, after a long trip into the Western Desert, I returned to Cairo to stay at some small quite run-down hotel: on one side, a Mosque, while not that far away on the other side was a night-club. A strange, quixotic, juxtaposition that seemed to capture something of the real modern Egypt. Of course, very early next morning the Adhaan from the mosque woke me. I did not mind. Indeed, I found it hauntingly beautiful and, strangely, not strange at all; as if it was some long-forgotten and happy memory, from childhood perhaps.

Once, I happened to be cycling from Cairo airport to the centre of the city as dawn broke, my route taking me past several Mosques. So timeless, so beautiful, the architecture, the minarets, framed by the rising sun...

Once, and many years before my conversion, I bought from a bookshop in Cairo a copy of the Quran containing the text in Arabic with a parallel English interpretation, and would occasionally read parts of it, and although I found several passages interesting, intriguing, I then had no desire, felt no need, to study Islam further. Similarly, the many friendly conversations I had with Egyptians during such travels - about their land, their culture, and occasionally about Islam - were for me just informative, only the interest of a curious outsider, and did not engender any desire to study such matters in detail.

However, all these experiences, of a decade and more, engendered in me a feeling which seemed to grow stronger year by year with every new trip. This was the feeling that somehow in some strange haunting way I belonged there, in such places, as part of such a culture. A feeling which caused me - some time after the tragic death of Sue (aged 39) from cancer in the early 1990's - to enrol on, and begin, an honours course in Arabic at a British university.

Thus, suffice to say that a decade of such travel brought a feeling of familiarity and resonance with Egypt, its people, its culture, that land, and with the Islam that suffused it, so that when in the Summer of 1998 I seriously began to study Islam, to read Ahadith,

Seerah, and the whole Quran, I had at least some context from practical experience. Furthermore, the more I studied Islam in England in those Summer months the more I felt, remembered, the sound of the beautiful Adhaan; remembered the desert - that ætherial purity, that sense of God, there; and remembered that haunting feeling of perhaps already belonging to such a culture, such a way of life. Hence my conversion to Islam, then, in September of that year, seemed somehow fated, wyrdful."

After some months of studying Islam, during that Summer of 1998 - my new strategy regarding some religion completely forgotten - it occurred to me that the Way of Al-Islam was indeed a good way to bring-into-being a new, a noble, society with a warrior ethos, and the more I read about the life of the Prophet, Muhammad, the more I came to admire him. There did, indeed, seem to be something remarkable, something numinous, something divine, here, in both the life of the Prophet, Muhammad, and in the Quran, and so - inspired and naively enthusiastic again - I trundled off to the nearest Mosque.

For nearly half an hour I hesitated - for these were the people I had spent thirty years trying to get out of Britain. How would they react to the former leader of the neo-nazi NSM walking into "their" Mosque?

At first when I, quite nervously, entered there seemed to be no one around. Out of respect, I removed my shoes and knocked on an inner door. The Imaam opened it - but he could not speak English, and I tried to say something in Arabic but the only thing that made sense was *Shahadah*. Soon, someone was fetched, who translated, and the Imaam embraced me. They were so pleased and so friendly that I admit that, then, tears came to my eyes, and I really felt I had, finally, arrived at the right place.

In retrospect, the years of my involvement with Islam were some of the most memorable of my life. Years when I learnt more about myself, and years which changed me fundamentally.

Not long after my conversion, I enrolled on a residential course in Arabic, and began to seriously study Ahadith, and, for several years, I was quite content as a Muslim - Namaz strengthened me, placed me into a humble relationship with my brothers and sisters; just as being part of the Ummah dissolved every last vestige of my former political beliefs. Ethnicity, one's territorial place of birth, the type of work one did, were all irrelevant. That is, I came to reject all forms of nationalism, including National-Socialism, and

racialism itself.

I was welcomed into the homes of brothers, met their families, and there was this world within a world where what mattered was love of the prophet, Muhammad, and a desire to selflessly obey the word of Allah, as manifest in the Quran, the Sunnah, and *Ijmah*.

Meanwhile, my relationship with my wife became more and more strained - certainly not helped by my many absences to meet with Muslim friends, and most certainly not helped by the Media interest in me that occurred following the trial, and the conviction, of Copeland for the London nail-bombings.

Following the arrest of Copeland, I - by then a Muslim - was interviewed at my home by Detectives from the Anti-Terrorism branch who were investigating if I had any connection with him, and they seemed satisfied that I did not, for I was not interviewed again about the matter. Some time after this - many months, as the date for Copeland's trial came near - I was, for several days, followed around by a large red van which covertly filmed and photographed me, my place of work (a farm), and my home, before being waylaid, early one morning while on my way to work (as usual by bicycle) by a film crew from the BBC's Panorama television programme who were making what they described as a "documentary" about the bombings. Among the statements put to me that morning was:

"You inspired Copeland indirectly to do what he did.." [12]



Waylaid by the BBC

Following Copeland's conviction and imprisonment, the BBC Panorama programme was broadcast, and I, not long after, was pursued for a while by

journalists from several newspapers, with several scurrilous articles about me appearing in print. One even included a photograph of our house, and named the village where my wife and I lived. One of these newspaper articles began (complete with photograph of me riding my bicycle on my way back from work):

*" This is the man who shaped mind of a bomber; Cycling the lanes around Malvern, the mentor who drove David Copeland to kill...*

Riding a bicycle around his Worcestershire home town sporting a wizard-like beard and quirky dress-sense, the former monk could easily pass as a country eccentric or off-beat intellectual.

But behind David Myatt's studious exterior lies a more sinister character that has been at the forefront of extreme right-wing ideology in Britain since the mid-1960s. Myatt... was the brains behind the country's most openly neo-nazi organization....."

Yes indeed - *quirky dress sense*. That would be the type of clothes worn by a farm labourer, then.

As might be expected, all this Media interest somewhat affected my relationship with my wife, and she became quite distant, emotionally, physically, from me. Less than a year later, she became ill, suffering what is often termed a nervous breakdown. For a few months we stayed together, by which time it was obvious that our relationship was over.

In fairness to my wife, I have to admit that I had, yet again - and after my return to practical politics, followed by my conversion to Islam - descended down to abject, unforgivable, selfishness, placing some abstract goal, the personal pursuit of some abstract ideology, and then involvement with Islam, before her; before her needs. In brief, I was not a very good husband to her - more concerned with exterior supra-personal matters than with her, than with our relationship, than with her happiness. That she endured for so long with so little from me is tribute surely to her, as a loving woman. Mea Culpa, Mea Culpa, Mea Maxima Culpa.

Thus, my marriage over, I travelled in the Muslim world, met some very interesting and committed Muslims, all the while continuing my Muslim education, and it was some Muslims I met who asked me to write about this particular Way of Life; writings which I was, for some years, to become associated with, under my Muslim name of Abdul-Aziz ibn Myatt.

But was I, as some people have wondered, a sincere Muslim? Did I, for example, really believe that Muhammad was the Messenger and Prophet of Allah? Yes, I was sincere, and yes I did believe that, just as decades before, and for a while, I believed that Jesus of Nazareth was the Son of God. Did I really believe that Shariah was the best way of living? Yes - because I accepted that I was fallible, and that to submit to the will of Allah was my duty, my honourable duty, as a Muslim. [13]

In a literal way, Islam taught me humility, something I aspired to during my time as a monk but which my then prideful nature rebelled against.

Why, then, did I begin to have doubts about that particular Way of Life, as manifest in some effusions and personal letters I wrote? As usual with my life, there was no *satori* - no one sudden moment of enlightenment with one's life thereafter and always changed. Rather, there were moments of empathy, of greater understanding, of insight, followed by a gradual return to almost, but not quite, where one had been before. Then, after some causal Time - of a duration sometimes short, sometimes long - there followed more such moments, until a slow, almost alchemical, change occurred within.

In retrospect, this change had its genesis in three things. First, because practical experience - my life as a Muslim - revealed to me, after a few years, how even the Ummah was woefully divided, how some Muslims seemed to be Muslim in name only, like some Catholics obeyed the precepts of their faith if and when it suited them, and how, it seemed to me, the various interpretations of certain texts often led to adherence to particular abstractions over and above a living numinously. [14] Second, after several years of interior struggle, of dwelling upon certain ethical and philosophical questions, I came to certain conclusions; and third, because - and most importantly, most significant of all - I became involved with, fell in love with, a certain lady.

Thus, this drift away from Islam resulted from a strange - perhaps a wyrdful - combination of circumstances, and from one singular, important, event.

### *A Personal Tragedy*

While still involved with Islam - although I had begun to develop my philosophy of the Numinous Way - I met a most beautiful lady. She was a friend of one of my closest friends, and he and his partner had, since the end of my marriage, been trying to bring us together, believing that we might

find each other interesting.

By then, I had been living and working on a farm for several years (a life and a work which inspired that initial development of my 'numinous way'), and although I had had a few casual trysts during that time, I still nurtured a desire for a deeper, permanent, relationship, and - intrigued by what I had been informed was her love of the desert and her desire to undertake more such travels, especially in the Western Sahara, an area I had come to know reasonably well - I agreed to contact her, more with a vague kind of hope than any real expectation of such a relationship developing.

Thus, Frances and I arranged to meet, after speaking to each other, via the medium of the telephone, several times. I have always rather disliked the impersonal nature of that medium - for one cannot see the eyes, the face, of the person one is conversing with - but, rather strangely for me, I conversed with her in the days before our meeting for several hours, not once, but twice, for we did seem to have something of a rapport.

We met on the concourse of York railway station, and it would be something of an understatement to write that I was immediately attracted to her. In truth, I was rather astounded, for during our prior telephone conversations she had, several times, made it known to me that she was not "at her best", that she was still somewhat depressed, and that I was not "to expect too much".

Although I recognized her immediately, as she came through the crowd toward where I was sitting, I was so impressed by her beauty, her very presence, that, for several seconds, I quite literally could not move, and when I did, stumbling to my feet, she was there and, without hesitation, we embraced each other and kissed as though we had been lovers for months, years.



A day later, and I was already in love with her, and for almost a year I would -



every fortnight or so and when possible - travel by train to visit her in York. In those days, such journeys and stays away were not onerous, for I had sufficient funds to travel First Class and stay in excellent hotels. Once - over the Christmas period - Fran came to stay at the farm, for nearly two weeks, and to write that we had an enjoyable time would be something of an exaggeration. By then, I had proposed marriage, which she had accepted, and then seemed unsure about. We talked during that time, at some length, about travelling - especially into the Sahara Desert, as we considered moving to live in Egypt, but never arrived at any conclusion.

For years before our meeting - for most of her adult life in truth - she had a difficult time caused by regular periods of clinical depression. She also, for some unfathomable reason, often disliked herself intensely. Yet she was beautiful - astonishingly so at times when life flowed within her and animated her - and intelligent and talented. But little I could say or do made her feel better about herself in those periods when she descended down into bouts of self-deprecation - at least, these things did not seem to work for very long. That is, she always and so sadly returned to such self-deprecation. Thus our relationship went from glorious, ecstatic, highs to tremendous lows. But I loved her, and so persevered, hoping, trusting, that such love would and could aid and help her. For I had glimpsed - in moments, and sometimes for days on end - the woman she really was, she could be, beyond her self-loathing, her sometimes self-destructive habits.

My diverse and interesting past did not help our relationship, for several of her friends in York had, without ever having met me, "warned her about me" and so perhaps confused her, somewhat.

After eighteen or so often turbulent months (during which time she was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes), I went to visit her in her rather cramped flat in York, intending to stay only a few days. Our plan, then, was to find an apartment, possibly in York, or possibly even abroad, and so begin a new life together. A few days there together became a week, then two weeks, then three... for she did not want me to go and could not decide what she wanted to do. It became a difficult time, not helped by a full page article about me - complete with photograph - which appeared in *The Times* newspaper under the heading *Muslim Extremists in Britain*.

" A neo-nazi whose ideas were said to be the inspiration for the man who let off a nail bomb in Central London in 1999 has converted to an extremist form of Islam...

Myatt is reportedly the author of a fascist terrorist handbook and a former leader of the violent far-right group Combat 18..."

We or rather I talked, occasionally, about just impetuously leaving to begin new lives, together, in Egypt. For I felt such surroundings might gently entice her toward a new and better way of living which would enable her to find the personal happiness that so eluded her, except in moments.

But, after an intense six or so weeks in York, with still no decisions made, I felt that Fran and I needed a short break from each other. She did not feel this, and desired me to stay. But I - tired, physically, emotionally, and making excuses to myself - decided to go anyway, and so early one morning in late May I travelled back to the farm. Only hours after my leaving, she killed herself.

She left no note, had taken on overdose of insulin, placed a bag over her head and secured it with layers of tape, and it is true to say that I was never quite the same person after receiving that call from her mother, less than an hour after Fran had died and only hours after I had so selfishly returned to be again among, within, the rural peace of the farm.

For hours after that telephone call I could not speak, and wandered around the fields of the farm alone, dazed - as if all feeling, and most of my blood, had suddenly been drained away from me to leave me almost totally bereft of life. Then, alone again in my room, the tears came flooding forth - so many for so long I sank to the floor to rock slowly back and forth, as if all of Fran's suffering year after year was flooding through me, as if I was being tossed around by surging towering waves of grief and battered by storms of remorse. Then, thoughts of suicide. Thereupon a certain calmness as I began to ponder the best way to die - a shotgun, perhaps, barrels placed under chin...

So much emotion within me, so much grief, so much dark death-embracing despair at my own failure, my own selfishness, that I felt, I knew, I had to die, and I was on my way to collect the chosen instrument of my death when, perhaps fortuitously, my mobile telephone rang. I was about to turn it off but glanced at the screen to see who was calling. It was a call from her mother, and - then knowing this - for what seemed a long duration of causal Time (but was only a few seconds) I dithered between disconnecting the call and answering, intending to say a few brief words to express again my blame. Words of blame won, and so I answered her call.

But there was such sadness in her voice, such grief at the loss of her daughter, that I felt ashamed, utterly ashamed, of my own selfish self-absorption. Thus we talked, trying to understand the circumstances, and

sharing a little of our grief. And as I listened to her words, her voice, there came upon me the feeling that perhaps I had to live, that I should live, in order to bear the shame, to feel my grief, to live with the knowledge of my selfish nature, my abject failure, day after day. That, surely, might be a fitting punishment, or the beginning thereof. To die might be easy; to live with such self-knowledge would surely be - and should be - hard.

My feelings at the time were weakly captured in an effusion, dated 30 May 2006, which I sent to a friend:

I know what I should have done - been more patient; more supportive; more loving; placing her feelings, her life, before my own. But I made excuses for my failings here, not knowing the depth of her despair even though I who loved her should have known this, felt this. I made excuses for my selfishness, and listened to her Doctor; to others; to my sometimes selfish desires, when I should have listened to her far more.

Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant, vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was. No blame for me, her relatives say - but I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am.

How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words, for she whom I loved killed herself only hours after I had left. Killed herself - only hours after I had left, despite her pleading for me to stay. There are no words to describe my blame; no words - for I had gone for a selfish break, to walk in the fields of the Farm.

So I am lost, bereft; guilty, crying, mourning the loss of her beauty, her life, her love, Never again to hold her hand; to embrace her. Never again to share a smile; a peaceful moment; our dream of being together in our home. The fault is mine, and I have to carry this knowledge of unintentionally aiding the ending of a life, this burden, and the guilt, hoping, praying, that somehow, sometime, somewhere I can give some meaning to her life, and perhaps live without ever again causing any suffering to any living thing... I miss her so much, so deeply, my mind suffused with images of what I did and did not do and should have done. If only I had not gone - or gone back to sit with her in that small garden as she wished.....

I shall never be the same again, deeply knowing that I do not understand.

(In Memory of Frances, died Monday, May 29, 2006)

In the weeks, the months, following Fran's death, Islam became personally irrelevant to me, for as I wrote at the time, I felt it would have been just too easy for me to depend upon, to turn to, to rely on, Allah, on God - to have one's remorse removed by some belief in some possible redemption, to have one's mistakes, errors - "sins" - voided by some supra-personal means. To escape into prayer, Namaz. Can there be, I began to wonder, hope, redemption - some meaning in personal tragedy - without a Saviour's grace? Without God, Allah, prayer, Namaz, submission, sin, and faith?

Gradually, painfully slowly, I seemed to move toward some answers, often as a result of personal letters written to friends [15]. For the act of so writing - of trying to so express my feelings, my thoughts - seemed to aid the process of interior reflexion.

However, for a while at least, I maintained a public Muslim persona, stubbornly clinging as I did to some notion of duty; to the pledge of loyalty I had given on my conversion to Islam, a pledge I still then, and for some time afterwards, felt I was honour-bound to honour, and it would take me some eighteen months of an intense interior struggle, and further development of the ethics of my Numinous Way, before I resolved this very personal dilemma. [16]

ooo

## **The Numinous Way/Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos**

### **A Debt of Honour**

As a result of my new and intense interior struggles - promoted by Fran's death - there grew within me one uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while.

The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both

Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women (such as K, and J, and Twinkle) who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathei-mathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us - far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, beings we have been, and unfortunately often still are; far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, often violent, person I had been, until recently.

A chance, an opportunity twice refused after Fran's death, when I - still then addicted to abstractions - continued to sally forth on their behalf, as if in some way such abstractions were alive, or could be brought to life or made to live if only I, and others, fought for them, sacrificed for them, suffered for them, and caused others to suffer.

But, as the third anniversary of Fran's suicide approached - amid the beauty and promise of one more English Spring - I became suffused again with tears, breaking forth from the sadness, the tragedy, the knowing, of my own unconscionable mistake. The mistake of forgetting; of distracting myself. Forgetting the sorrow, the grief, the pain born from the moments of their dying; distracting myself as I have been by immersing myself in such abstractions as gave me some rôle, some illusion of importance, to keep me occupied, arrogant, and vain: a debtor running away from his debt. A debtor making excuses for each new scheme and scam: an excuse for every hustle, delusion, and lie. For it was so easy - just so very easy - to continue to delude myself.

There are no excuses for this continued failure, this error, of mine, following Fran's death. No words which can hide the truth I tried to hide from myself for so long. The blame is mine, and mine alone. The blame for not immediately acting upon my own inner understanding.

For the reality of my past nine or so years is not that of some sudden life-changing revelation, but rather of a profound inner struggle whose genesis lay years before - in my experiences with and passion for women; in my time in a monastery; in my ever-growing love for Nature and my involvement with English rural life; in Sue's illness and her tragic death.

This intense struggle was akin to an addiction, and I an addict addicted to abstractions. A struggle between my empathy, my understanding, my pathemathos, and my life-long belief, itself an abstraction, that somehow in some way I could make a positive difference to the world and that such abstractions as I adhered to, or aided or advocated were or could be a beginning for a better world, and that to achieve this new world certain sacrifice were, unfortunately, necessary.

A struggle which gave rise to what became - refined, and extended, year after year - The Numinous Way, and which struggle was an interior war to change myself, to actually live, every year, every month, every week, every day, suffused with an empathic awareness and a desire not to cause suffering; the struggle to abandon abstractions.

For nine years or so this interior struggle wore me down, until it gradually faded away. It was akin to cycling up a long steep mountain climb in mist and drizzly rain, struggling on against one's aching body and against the desire to stop and rest; and not being able to see the end, the summit, of the climb. And then, slowly, the drizzle ceases, the mist begins to clear, the road becomes gradually less steep, and one is there - in warm bright sunshine nearing the summit of that climb, able to see the beautiful, the numinous, vista beyond, below, for the first time, and which vista after such an effort brings a restful interior peace, the silent tears of one person who feels their human insignificance compared to the mountains, the valleys below, the sky, the Sun, and the vast Cosmos beyond: the wyrdful nature of one fleeting delicate mortal microcosmic nexion which is one's own life.

### **The Silent Tears of My Unknowing**

Thus, and at last, I ceased all involvement with Islam. In truth, I ceased involvement with everything; becoming only one still error-prone human being among billions. One human being who had no aim, no goals, who

adhered to no abstractions - either his own or manufactured by others - but who instead just lived day after fleeting or slow day, and who occasionally would record, by some written words, some experience, some personal feeling, or the result of some Thought, manifest as a poem, perhaps, or some missive to a friend, or perhaps an article to elucidate some matter concerned with that Numinous Way [17] which, over those nine years of struggle, represented both the silent tears of my unknowing and the results of my *πάθει μάθος* [18].

As I was to write, not that long ago now, and while on a holiday:

The moment of sublime knowing  
As clouds part above the Bay  
And the heat of Summer dries the spots of rain  
Still falling:  
I am, here, now, where dark clouds of thunder  
Have given way to blue  
Such that the tide, turning,  
Begins to break my vow of distance  
Down.

A women, there, whose dog, disobeying,  
Splashes sea with sand until new interest  
Takes him where  
This bearded man of greying hair  
No longer reeks  
With sadness.  
Instead:  
The smile of joy when Sun of Summer  
Presents again this Paradise of Earth  
For I am only tears, falling

Thus, it is to Sue and Fran to whom I dedicate this work: they who profoundly changed me, and to whom I owe so much. They who by a remembrance of their love, their lives, their gifts, have finally, at last - after so much arrogance and stupidity and weakness on my part - revealed to me the most important truth concerning human life. Which is that a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all.

*Fini*

*Footnotes:*

[1] See also the section *Excursus - Galactic Imperium*, below.

[2] One thing about school Physics I continued to immensely enjoy was practical work in the laboratory, for which work I almost always received an A plus. Indeed, on the one occasion I recall receiving a miserly plain A, I complained about the marking.

[3] One humorous thing about this criminal trial - which lasted many days - was that I was "in the dock" along with some of our Red opponents. These so-called communists had all attired themselves in suits and ties and had short hair - in order to try and make a good impression - while I, *au contraire*, did not care to pander to expectations, and so had grown a beard, had long hair, sported jeans, a collarless shirt without a tie, and wore an ex-RAF Greatcoat. Thus, I somewhat resembled the archetypal communist agitator while they resembled archetypal fascists.

I was to keep this bearded appearance for the next thirty years, although I did, on occasion, shave off my beard if I needed to travel somewhere incognito, often using some alternative identity.

[4] Morrison was, in later years, to pen his own recollections of those violent times; recollections which were somewhat inaccurate. See the Appendix of *Ethos of Extremism* for my comments on Morrison's recollections of those times.

[5] In previous years, having an alternate identity or two proved useful, given my life-style and inclinations.

[6] An extract from this unpublished and incomplete work - whose manuscript I subsequently lost - was published, in 1984, under the title *Vindex - Destiny of The West*.

[7] I mostly rode a fixed gear bike, and never won any events, although I was second and third a few times. I just enjoyed the challenge, but did manage 50 miles in under two and half hours, and - a few years later - won my club's Best All-Rounder trophy, one year, for the most consistent rider during a season.

[8] One curious incident during these years - relating to politics - may be worth recording. Understandably, given my extremism, the anti-fascist group *Searchlight* had taken a dislike to me, and - following the murder, in



Shropshire, of the elderly CND activist Hilda Murrell, they gave my name to the Police as a possible suspect.

As a result, Detectives from Shrewsbury Police interviewed me both at my home, in Church Stretton, and my then place of work - a country house in South Shropshire. Satisfied with my alibi, they eliminated me from their enquiries.

I was subsequently contacted and interviewed by Jenny Rathbone, a rather attractive research assistant from ITV's *World In Action* television programme who were producing a documentary about the murder. She also seemed satisfied that I had nothing to do with the incident, and I do recall sending her, anonymously, a bunch of red roses with a card which read "Good luck with your investigations." It was signed, *A Little Devil*.

[9] These travels included various trips to Egypt, and two into the Sahara desert on a bicycle. Given that most of the desert area I explored was *hamada* - and thus did not have large, archetypal, sand-dunes - these bicycle trips were was not as difficult as they might seem.

[10] We had to obtain a special and official permit to enable us to take several weeks supply of heroin medication out of the country, as we had to obtain special medical insurance, both of which were very kindly arranged by our local GP.

[11] In his book, *Homeland: Into a World of Hate*, the journalist Nick Ryan made several accusations about me as well as published some rumours about me without providing my side of the story. For instance, he states:

"When Myatt later falls out with Will Browning, he insists on a duel... I'm told he backed down when The Beast claims the right to use baseball bats as weapon."

The truth is that Browning - through a contact, and via e-mail - did suggest such a weapon, to which I replied that the only weapons which could be honourably used were deadly weapons, such as swords or pistols. I included with my reply a copy of the Rules of Duelling, and re-affirmed my challenge to fight a duel using such deadly weapons. I received no reply, and was not contacted in any way by either Browning or his supporters.

[12] As is a common practice with recorded television programmes, some of my comments were edited out by the producers.

[13] This obedience was why I, as a Muslim, supported the people, and the

policies, I did - because I believed those Muslims were correct, and acting in accord with the Will of Allah, and because I regarded those particular policies as correct, according to Quran and Sunnah.

[14] Rather naively, perhaps, I had somehow expected Islam to be different, and it began to occur to me, from direct personal experience, that all conventional religions, and Ways - however numinously they might presence part of The Numen - were in some or many ways unreasonable abstractions which human beings had to align themselves to and strive to be in accord with, and which quite often resulted in a particular attitude antithetical to empathy and *wu-wei*.

Some of these insights were expressed in works of mine such as *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos: Essays and Letters Regarding Spirituality, Humility, and A Learning From Grief*.

[15] Some of these letters have been published, by JRW, in the second part of the collection entitled *David Wulstan Myatt: Selected Letters, Part One (2002-2008)*

[16] As I wrote in a footnote to one of my many scribblings:

For almost four years - since Francine's suicide - I struggled with this dilemma of honour and duty, believing that it was my honourable duty to stubbornly adhere to the particular Way of Life I had embraced in the previous decade; and stubbornly adhere despite the conclusions of my own thinking regarding compassion and empathy, manifest as these conclusions were in the ethical, and non-racist, Numinous Way that I had continued to develop. Thus did I during this period, and several times, publicly and in private re-affirm my commitment to that particular Way of Life, striving hard to forget my own answers, born from my thinking, my experiences, and especially from that personal tragedy, for surely these things were only a test, a trial, of my belief, my honour? Was it not therefore my duty to just humbly submit to الله, to thus acknowledge that my own thinking, my own conclusions based on experience, were flawed, the product of error and pride?

But, to paraphrase TS Eliot, here I am now, in the middle way I have devised for myself, having had many years, often wasted, the years between two wars within myself -

“ Trying to use words, and every attempt  
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.”

Thus, I have declared a still rather shaky new truce, a compromise: based on a treaty where I have (re)defined personal honour as a practical manifestation of empathy, of the desire to cease to cause suffering to living-beings, with such empathy and the compassion deriving from it a guide to living that awareness of ourselves as but one nexion to all Life and to the Cosmos, and which awareness, which Cosmic perspective, expresses both our true human nature and the potential we possess to change ourselves into higher, more evolved, beings.

I would like to believe that this new truce I have manufactured will hold, but I have believed that before, and been mistaken, and even now it occurs to me that my theory of ethics, my new definition of honour, is just that: *mine*, and that I may be wrong. Yet my experiences - my feeling for, my empathy with, the numinous (manifest for instance in sublime music or in a mutual personal love) - tell me I can only live what I feel, I know, I empathize with, and this now is presenced in my developed Numinous Way.

During these years of interior reflexion, I studied, for several years, what was regarded as the interior way of Islam - that is, Sufism - in the hope that such a study might provide some guidance in respect of the ethical and philosophical questions, in relation to the Way of Al-Islam, which still perplexed and troubled me. However, this study just led me back to my own Philosophy of The Numen, and to develop it further.

[17] In the late Spring of 2012, I completely revised my 'numinous way' following a year-long period of reflexion; a reflection that led me to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the basic initial insights (2002-2006) and the personal pathei-mathos (2006-2011) that inspired that 'numinous way'; a re-expression contained in the two texts *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Recuyle of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. Thus the philosophy of *πάθει μάθος* (pathei-mathos) - as outlined in those two texts - is not only my own now completed weltanschauung, but also represents both the essence and the substance of what I have retained of the 'numinous way' I haphazardly and sporadically developed between 2002-2006 and then, after 2006, I increasingly felt compelled to develop in expiation, in search of answers, and in an effort to understand myself, my extremist pasts, and the suffering I finally came to realize I had caused.

[18]

Ζῆνα δέ τις προφρόνως ἐπινίκια κλάζων  
τεύξεται φρενῶν τὸ πᾶν:

τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ-  
σαντα, τὸν **πάθει μάθος**  
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.  
στάζει δ' ἔν θ' ὕπνῳ πρὸ καρδίας  
μνησιπήμων πόνος· καὶ παρ' ἄ-  
κοντας ἦλθε σωφρονεῖν.  
δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις βίαιος  
σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,  
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;  
Of he who guided mortals to reason,  
Who laid down that this possesses authority:  
'*Learning from adversity*'.

Even in sleep there trickles through the heart  
The disabling recalling of the pain:  
And wisdom arrives regardless of desire,  
A favour from daimons  
Who have taken the seats of honour, by force.

*Aeschylus: Agamemnon (174-183) translated by DW Myatt*

ooo

## **Appendix 1**

### **Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing**

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my

nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness.

For what I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via *pathei-mathos*, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certainty-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certainty-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculine is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via *pathei-mathos* and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe,

even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption.

Thus, and for instance, I sense - only sense - that peace (or the beginning thereof) might possibly just be not only the freedom from subsuming personal desires but also the freedom from striving for some supra-personal, abstract, impersonal, goal or goals. That is, a just-being, a flowing and a being-flowed. No subsuming concern with what-might-be or what-was. No lust for ideations; no quest for the violation of difference. Instead - a calmful waiting; just a listening, a seeing, a feeling, of what-is as those, as our, emanations of Life flow and change as they naturally flow and change, in, with, and beyond us: human, animal, of sea, soil, sky, Cosmos, and of Nature... But I am only dreaming, here in pathei-mathos-empathy-land where there is no past-present-future passing each of us with our future-past: only the numen presenced in each one of our so individual timeless human stories.

Yet, in that - this - other world, the scent of having understood remains, which is why I feel I now quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing certain allegations.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their

motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are ( *ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*.

May 2012

ooo

## **Appendix 2**

### **Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way**

#### **Background**

What I term The Numinous Way, as a philosophy and as a way of life, was not the result of a few or many moments of inspiration striking close together in causal Time as measured by a terran-calendar and thus separated from each other by days, weeks, or even a few years.

Rather, it resulted from some nine years of reflexions, intuitions, and experiences, beginning in 2002 when - for quite a few months - I wandered as a vagabond in the hills and fells of Westmorland and lived in a tent, and during which time I communicated some of my musings, by means of handwritten letters, to a lady living in Oxford whom I had first met well over a decade before.

These musing concerned Nature, our place - as humans - in Nature and the Cosmos; the purpose, if any, of our lives; whether or not the five Aristotelian essentials gave a true understanding of the external world; and whether or not God, or Allah, or some sort of divinity or divinities, existed, and thus - if they did not - whence came mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding,

and what value or validity, if any, did such mystical insight, knowledge, and understanding, possess.

During the previous thirty or more years I had occasional intuitions concerning, or feelings, regarding, Nature, divinity, the Cosmos, and 'the numinous'; insights and feelings which led me to study Taoism, Hellenic culture, Buddhism, the Catholic mystic tradition, and become a Catholic monk. Later on, such intuitions concerning the numinous - and travels in the Sahara Desert - led me to begin a serious study of Islam and were part of the process that led me to convert to that way of life.

But these intuitions, feelings - and the understanding and knowledge they engendered - were or always eventually became secondary to what, since around 1964, I had considered or felt was the purpose of my own life. This was to aid, to assist, in some way the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and it was enthusiasm for - the inspiration of - that ideal which led me to seriously study the science of Physics, and then to seek to find what type of society might be able to make that ideal a reality, a seeking initially aided by my study of and enthusiasm for Hellenic culture, a culture - manifest in Greek heroes such as Odysseus and in the warrior society home to the likes of the sons of Atreus - which I came to regard as the ideal prototype for this new society of new explorers and new heroes.

After considering, and then rejecting, the communist society of the Soviet Union [1], an intuition regarding National-Socialist Germany [2] led me to seriously study that society and National-Socialism, a study ended when I peremptorily concluded that I had indeed found the right type of modern society. Thus I became a National-Socialist, with my aim - the purpose of my life - being to aid the foundation of a new National-Socialist State as a prelude to the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and thus the creation of a Galactic Imperium, a new Galactic, or Cosmic, Reich.

As I wrote in part one of some autobiographical scribblings issued in 1998 and which were based on some writings of mine dating back to the 1970's:

"It is the vision of a Galactic Empire which runs through my political life just as it is the quest to find and understand our human identity, and my own identity, and our relation to Nature, which runs through my personal and spiritual life, giving me the two aims which I consistently pursued since I was about thirteen years of age, regardless of where I was, what I was doing and how I was described by others or even by myself..."



For it was this aim of the exploration and the colonization of Outer Space, and my rather schoolboyish enthusiasm for it, which - together with the enjoyment of the struggle - inspired my fanaticism, my extremism, and which re-inspired me when, as sometimes occurred during my NS decades, my enthusiasm for politics, for a political revolution, waned, or when my intuitions, my feelings, concerning the numinous and my love of women - the dual inspiration for most of my poetry - became stronger than my political beliefs and my revolutionary fervour.

The aim, the purpose, this idealization, regarding Outer Space even partly motivated my study of and thence my conversion to Islam in 1998. For example, not long before that conversion, in an essay entitled *Foreseeing The Future*, I wrote:

" I firmly believe that Islam has the potential to create not only a new civilization, governed according to reason, but also a new Empire which could take on and overthrow the established world-order dedicated as this world-order is to usury, decadence and a god-less materialism [...] I also believe that a new Islamic Empire could create the Galactic Empire, or at least lay the foundations of it. Perhaps the first human colonies on another world will have as their flag the Islamic crescent, a flag inscribed with the words, in Arabic, In the Name of Allah, The Compassionate, The Merciful."

Thus, as when a National-Socialist, I dedicated myself to my 'new cause', to an ideal I idealistically carried in the headpiece of my head: the cause of Jihad, of disrupting existing societies as a prelude to manufacturing a new one. In this instance, a resurgent Khilafah.

As with National-Socialism, it was the ideal, the goal, the struggle, which was paramount, important; and I - like the extremist I was - hubriatically placed that goal, that ideal, that struggle for victory, before love, fairness, compassion, reason, and truth, and thus engendered and incited violence, hatred, and killing.

In addition, I always felt myself bound by honour to be loyal to either a cause, an ideology, or to certain individuals and so do the duty I had sworn by oath to do and be loyal to those I had sworn to be loyal to. Hence when doubts about my beliefs arose during my decades as a nazi I always had recourse to honour and so considered myself - even during my time as a monk - as a National-Socialist, albeit, when a monk, as a non-active one for

whom there was ultimately no contradiction between the NS ethos and the ethos of a traditional Catholicism, for there was the Reichskonkordat and the agreement Pope Pius XII reached with Hitler.

During my Muslim years I felt bound by the oath of my Shahadah; an oath which negated my NS beliefs and led me to reject racism and nationalism, and embrace the multi-racialism of the Ummah; and which general oath, together (and importantly) with a personal oath sworn a few years after my conversion, would always - until 2009 - bring me back, or eventually cause me to drift back, to Islam and always remind me of the duty I felt I was, as a Muslim, honour-bound to do.

## **2002-2006**

This drift back toward Islam is what occurred after my musings in 2002. I tried to forget them, a task made difficult when later that year I went to live on a farm and also work on another nearby farm. For that living and such work brought a deep personal contentment and further intuitions and feelings, and a burgeoning understanding, regarding the numinous, and especially concerning Nature; some of which intuitions and feelings I again communicated by means of handwritten letters, mostly to the aforementioned lady.

For a while I sought to find a synthesis, studied Sufism, but was unable to find any satisfactory answers, and thus began an interior struggle, a personal struggle I made some mention of in *Myngath*. A struggle, a conflict, between my own intuitions, insights, and burgeoning understanding - regarding the numinous and human beings - and the way of faith and belief; between what I felt was a more natural, a more numinous way, and the necessary belief in Allah, the Quran, the Sunnah that Islam, that being Muslim, required.

For a while, faith and belief and duty triumphed; then I wavered, and began to write in more detail about this still as yet unformed 'numinous way'. Then, yet again honour, duty, and loyalty triumphed - but only a while - for I chanced to meet and then fell in love with a most beautiful, non-Muslim, lady. And it was our relationship - but most of all her tragic death in May 2006 - that intensified my inner struggle and forced me to ask and then answer certain fundamental questions regarding my past and my own nature.

As I wrote at the time:

" Thus do I feel and now know my own stupidity for my arrogant,

vain, belief that I could help, assist, change what was [...] I know my blame, my shame, my failure, here. Thus am I fully humbled by my own lack of insight; by my lack of knowing; by an understanding of my selfishness and my failure - knowing myself now for the ignorant, arrogant person I was, and am. How hypocritical to teach, to preach, through writings, feeling as I do now the suffering of words."

I did not like the answers about myself that this tragedy forced me to find; indeed, I did not like myself and so, for a while, clung onto Islam, onto being Muslim; onto the way of faith, of God, of ignoring my own answers, my own feelings, my own intuitions. For there was - or so it then seemed - expiation, redemption, hope, and even some personal comfort, there. But this return to such surety just felt wrong, deeply wrong.

## **2006-2009**

For there was, as I wrote in *Myngath*,

"...one uncomfortable truth from which even I with all my sophistry could not contrive to hide from myself, even though I tried, for a while. The truth that I am indebted. That I have a debt of personal honour to both Fran and to Sue, who died - thirteen years apart - leaving me bereft of love, replete with sorrow, and somewhat perplexed. A debt to all those other women who, over four decades, I have hurt in a personal way; a debt to the Cosmos itself for the suffering I have caused and inflicted through the unethical pursuit of abstractions.

A debt somehow and in some way - beyond a simple remembrance of them - to especially make the life and death of Sue and Fran worthwhile and full of meaning, as if their tragic early dying meant something to both me, and through my words, my deeds, to others. A debt of change, of learning - in me, so that from my pathos I might be, should be, a better person; presencing through words, living, thought, and deeds, that simple purity of life felt, touched, known, in those stark moments of the immediacy of their loss.

But this honour, I have so painfully discovered, is not the abstract honour of years, of decades, past that I in my arrogance and stupid adherence to and love of abstractions so foolishly believed in and

upheld, being thus, becoming thus, as I was a cause of suffering. No; this instead is the essence of honour, founded in empathy; in an empathy with and thus a compassion for all life, sentient and otherwise. This is instead a being human; being in symbiosis with that-which is the essence of our humanity and which can, could and should, gently evolve us - far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, beings we have been, and unfortunately often still are; far away from the primitive unempathic, uncompassionate, often violent, person I had been."

Thus I was prompted - forced - to continue to develop my understanding in what began to be and became my own 'numinous way' and which thus and finally and, in 2009 publicly, took me away from Islam and my life as a Muslim.

## **2009-2012**

Given that the essence of The Numinous Way is individual empathy, an individual understanding, the development of an individual judgement, and the living of an ethical way of life where there is an appreciation of the numinous, the more I reflected upon this 'numinous way' between 2011 and Spring 2012, the more I not only realized my mistakes, but also that it was necessary to remove, to excise, the detritus that had accumulated around the basic insights and the personal pathei-mathos that inspired me to develop that 'numinous way'. Mistakes and detritus because for some time, during the development of that 'numinous way', I was still in thrall to some abstractions, still thinking in terms of categories and opposites, and still fond of pontificating and generalizing, especially about The State [3]. I therefore began to re-express, in a more philosophical manner, the personal, the individual, the ontological, the ethical and spiritual nature, of The Numinous Way, and thus emphasized the virtues of humility, love, and of wu-wei - of balance, of tolerance, of non-interference, of individual interior (spiritual) reformation, of non-striving, of admitting one's own uncertainty of understanding and of knowing.

The year-long [2011-2012] process of refinement, correction, and reflexion resulted in me re-naming what remained of my 'numinous way' the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', and which philosophy I attempted to outline in the two texts *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* and *Summary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, the latter of which was also published under the title *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

As I mentioned in *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos* [Part Four of *Reculye of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*] -

"Given that the concern of the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means [...]

This means that there is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example."

## **The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos**

It is the philosophy of pathei-mathos which represents my weltanschauung. For I now consider that most of my writings, my pontifications, concerning 'the numinous way' - written haphazardly between 2002 and Spring 2012 - are unhelpful; or of little account; or irrelevant; or hubriatic; or detract from or obscure the basic simplicity of my weltanschauung, a simplicity I have endeavoured to express in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

24th April 2012

(Revised November 2012)

### *Notes*

[1] During this study of communism, in the 1960's, I began to learn Russian and would regularly listen to communist radio broadcasts such as those from Rundfunk der DDR, something I continued to do for a while even after becoming a National-Socialist. Indeed, on one occasion I wrote a letter to Radio Berlin which, to my surprise, was read out with my questions answered.

[2] As I have mentioned elsewhere this intuition regarding the Third Reich arose as a result of me reading an account of the actions of Otto Ernst Remer in July of 1944. For I admired his honour and his loyalty and his commitment to the duty he had sworn an oath to do. Here, I felt, was a modern-day Greek hero.

[3] These un-numinous, errorful, hubriatic, pontifications about 'the state' included essays such as the January 2011 text *The Failure and Immoral Nature of The State* and the February 2011, text *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*.

Among the abstractions (categories) which needed to be excised from a supposedly abstraction-less and empathic numinous way were 'the clan' and 'homo hubris', a divisive category I hubriatically pontificated about in several essays.

ooo

## **Appendix 3**

(Extracts from)

### **The Ethos of Extremism Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life**

#### **Part One: 1968-1973**

## Becoming Nazi

My practical involvement in right-wing extremist politics really began in 1968 when I, still at school and not long returned from a childhood in the Far East and colonial Africa, became an active supporter of the newly formed National Front and of Colin Jordan's newly formed British Movement. My initial motivation for joining these organizations and becoming politically active was simple: to further the cause of National-Socialism and to enjoy the comradeship, the struggle for power, and the violence.

Some time before becoming so involved, I had chanced upon a copy of Shirer's book *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* and was inspired by the described actions of Otto Ernst Remer during the July 1944 plot against Hitler. Familiar as I was with *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* - with Hellenistic culture and history in general - I youthfully, rashly, made a connexion between the heroes of ancient Greece and Remer, impressed as I was by Remer's loyalty and sense of duty. This led me to, over subsequent months, read everything I could find about Hitler and the Third Reich; a reading which took me to local libraries and bookshops, then to bookshops and libraries in London. I even managed to find and buy copies (not originals) of old 8mm film of nazi rallies and some German propaganda films made during WW2, viewed using an old home projector; for I had discovered there was, even then in the 60's, something of an 'underground' market in nazi memorabilia.

Suffice to say that my reading and my viewing enthused me so that after a few months I considered myself a National-Socialist, an admirer of Adolf Hitler, believing that National-Socialism could create a new heroic age. To mark my 'conversion', I bought a small gold swastika tie-pin from a seller of nazi memorabilia and did not mind when, out wearing it, some people stared - for I was prepared either to launch into a rant about NS and Hitler or for a fight.

Thus while my initial motivation was naively idealistic and somewhat schoolboyish, I soon came to embrace NS racial doctrines, aided by acquiring and reading a copy of the English edition of HS Chamberlain's two volume work *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*. This meant I accepted that some races were superior, and others inferior; and that 'the Aryan race' - being the most superior, the most evolved - had a special 'destiny'. As for the extermination of the Jews, to be honest for some months I vacillated between two extremes - between believing 'it was unfortunate but perhaps necessary, an act of war' and between believing it 'was Allied propaganda'.

Horrid as acceptance of such genocide is, I had already become, without knowing it, an extremist; for I was prepared to accept or to dismiss horrid

facts, certain truths, in the belief that what mattered was the goal, the ideal, and that to achieve this one had to be harsh, even fanatical and brutal. In addition, I had come to regard war - modern war - as necessary, as the breeding ground of *arête*, and in war people are killed or slaughtered, just as the victors, the Greek heroes, in the Trojan war slaughtered many of the people of Troy after its fall and just as Alexander decimated the people of Massaga.

Later on, I was to discover that I was far from being alone, in neo-nazi circles, in this detestable acceptance of brutality and genocide. For instance, I can recall several discussions about the extermination of the Jews with support being voiced for such measures, and several occasions when a certain song, well-known in neo-nazi circles in the 60's and 70's, was sung by 'comrades', with the song beginning "Gas 'em all, gas 'em all, the long, and the short and the tall..."

However, in the months following my 'conversion' to the cause of National-Socialism I could not quite shake-off - for all my new enthusiasm and fanaticism - certain uncomfortable moral feelings regarding the holocaust, and so began reading voraciously about the subject, a reading which included trawling through multi-volume accounts such as *The Trial of German Major War Criminals: Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal Sitting at Nuremberg, Germany*. But in the end, after months of such reading and study, there came a point when I simply accepted, out of a desire to believe, that the genocide 'was Allied propaganda' so that, to me then and subsequently, further research regarding, or rational debate about, the matter became unnecessary. In effect, I came to fanatically believe it was war propaganda, and this fanatical belief was immune to criticism as I became intolerant of, dismissive of, others who tried to convince me that the horrors of the camps were real.

In retrospect, I needed to believe it was propaganda, a myth, because to do otherwise would destroy the imaginary, the idealistic, the perfect, the romanticized, National-Socialism I then believed in and accepted. To do otherwise would mean that Hitler was not as I imagined him to be, as I hoped he was: a noble and good man who had triumphed against all the odds purely out of a love for his people and his land. Thus it might be correct to conclude that my research into the matter then was biased, born not out of a desire to find 'the truth' but from a need to prove that my own conclusions, assumptions, and beliefs, were correct. There might therefore have been an element of faith involved here, and subsequently, such that inconvenient, or awkward, facts and truths are ignored, dismissed, or regarded as the 'propaganda' of those opposed to one's beliefs.

**Hatred, Love, and Violence**



Although - on joining the NF and BM - I was very naive about politics, something of a tabula rasa, I soon developed the same prejudices and the same hatreds as the people I came to associate with; prejudices and hatreds aided by pamphlets and books read, loaned and given, and by discussions with party members, especially those belonging to BM. Thus I came to regard 'immigrants' as somewhat uncivilized, certainly inferior to White people, and considered their removal from 'our land', our country, as a necessity. Before this, I had no opinions, no views, about such matters, and my understanding of National-Socialism was greatly aided and developed by personal discussions with, and by written correspondence I had with, Colin Jordan.

During this formative period, I subscribed to items such as *The Thunderbolt* newspaper published by Edward R. Fields and so regularly received anti-Jewish and anti-Black reports; reports that seemed to confirm the necessity of racial separation and the need for a final solution to 'the Jewish problem'. For I had, in common with nearly all BM members and many NF members, come to believe that the Jews, in England, as in many other Western lands, had too much power and too much influence, were somehow by nature badly disposed toward White people, and thus were our mortal enemies.

In practice these beliefs and prejudices, this racism, meant three obvious things, and one interesting and curious thing, as least it is curious and interesting to me, now, on reflexion. The three things are:

(1) That I developed a very idealized, a very romanticized, view of and naive love for those I regarded as my own people, my own race - especially in respect of English people; regarding them as probably the most civilized people on Earth who had built the best, the most noble, Empire the world had ever seen, and who had 'civilized' or brought civilization to large parts of the world.

(2) That I developed a prejudice and antagonism toward other races in general, and in particular against 'Blacks' and Jews, and thus, as a group, and politically, hated them and did not wish to associate with them.

(3) That I regarded violence in pursuit of my beliefs as natural and necessary, and came to regard political enemies - such as 'Reds' - as legitimate targets of political violence.

The one interesting and curious thing is:

That despite my racism, my nazi beliefs and ideals, my political

activism, I was not personally offensive to or prejudiced or violent toward or hated individuals of other races that I met, including Jews.

Thus, and apropos all four things, I somehow and in some way managed to compartmentalize my personal life and my political life, for although I enjoyed political brawls, and was not averse to using violence, it was not in my nature to be personally rude or offensive to or violent toward people as individuals, whatever their perceived ethnicity; unless, of course, they threatened me personally, one individual to another, or had personally threatened someone I cared about. In fact, my hatred and violence was more directed toward political enemies - especially during political confrontations - than it was to other races; so directed that for many years, from 1968 to 1974, I would actively seek out such potentially and hopefully violent political confrontations and enjoy them. This enjoyment, this seeking after violent confrontation, perhaps explains why Martin Webster, in 1971 after meeting with me a few times, described me to a friend of his (who was studying at the same University as me) as "having a death wish", a description which rather irked me then.

That said, about compartmentalization, I did for a long time - directly and indirectly - incite hatred and violence against other races, both by speeches, often vitriolic, impassioned, and always extempore, I gave at political events; in discussions with comrades and others; by means of articles I wrote, and by posters, leaflets, stickers, I designed. But this was, to me at the time, impersonal, just propaganda, somewhat calculated, and regarded as a necessity in order to achieve certain political goals - and was probably more reprehensible for so being impersonal and propagandistic.

Only on a few occasions was I directly, personally, involved in violence against ethnic minorities, and these were unplanned, spontaneous, incidents involving several 'ethnics', one of which incidents led to me being arrested and given a prison sentence, but in all of which incidents - to be honest - I was or became motivated by dislike of and anger at 'these foreigners' because I felt they did not belong in 'my country' and should 'go back to where they belonged'.

The particular racial incident that led to my arrest and my first term of imprisonment occurred in the early 1970's, following some racial clashes in Wakefield between skinheads and 'ethnics', in this instance people of or descended from those of Pakistani origin. On the day in question I, then domiciled in Leeds, was out with Eddy Morrison and a few other comrades handing out anti-immigration leaflets in Wakefield hoping to capitalize on the violence and so possibly gain some new recruits for the cause. The leafleting over, we came across a group of skinheads, some of whom I vaguely knew.

Sensibly, Morrison left while I, sensing there might be - and hopeful there would be - some violence, went with the skinheads looking for trouble. Thus it would be fair to say that I was responsible for what followed, as the Judge at my subsequent criminal trial judged I was. Our group - these young lads and I - wandered around for a while until we found some young Pakistani men whom we racially abused and then began to throw stones and bricks at. They ran away, and we gave chase... Suffice to say, when this first skirmish was over, we - buoyed by our success and I seem to recall at my instigation - went off in search of more targets. Eventually, after perhaps an hour or so - maybe more, maybe less - we found ourselves the subject of a large Police operation with officers chasing us. We split up and I, not knowing the area, ended up on some industrial lot with several Police officers blocking the only escape route. Soon, the Police had caught and arrested all of us [...]

## **Part Two: 1973-1975**

### **Ultra-Violence, Covert Action, and Terror**

Two significant events during this period (1973-1975) helped shape and develop my extremism. One was that I was released from my first term of imprisonment for violence, and the second was that I was recruited by the underground paramilitary and neo-nazi organization Column 88.

Simply put, prison hardened me even more, while involvement with Column 88 confirmed my faith in the ultimate victory of National-Socialism.

My imprisonment had perhaps the opposite effect to what the Judge at my trial may have intended, for far from 'teaching me a lesson' it only served to make me more fanatical and more violent. It also enabled me to learn new skills and acquire new contacts of a decidedly criminal kind, skills and contacts which - as I have mentioned elsewhere - I put to use following my release when I formed a small gang of thieves to liberate certain goods and fence them in order, initially at least, to fund various political schemes and projects of mine.

In addition, prison life seemed to me to confirm two of the fundamental axioms of National-Socialism, that of the necessity and value of *kampf* and that of the *führerprinzip*. That is, of hardening one's self, being prepared to use force, to be ruthless, unsentimental, in order to survive and prosper; and either earning respect or being obedient and submissive. For prison seemed to be like some ancient uncultured, uncivilized, macho tribal society where force or the threat of force (by both cons and screws), and/or one's personal cunning, were the basis of life, and where those of a violent or of a cunning nature tended to prosper. Perhaps fortunately I was or could be both violent

and cunning so it was not really surprising that I ran a racket inside, selling goods liberated from a variety of sources including prison stores.

This increased political fanaticism and more violent nature would lead me, months later and with the help of Eddy Morrison, to found, in December of 1973, a new political neo-nazi organization based in Leeds; the rather grandly named National Democratic Freedom Movement, and which organization would be rather aptly described, some years later, by John Tyndall in the following terms:

" The National Democratic Freedom Movement made little attempt to engage in serious politics but concentrated its activities mainly upon acts of violence against its opponents. [...] Before very long the NDFM had degenerated into nothing more than a criminal gang."

Thus 1973 and especially 1974 became, for me, a time of ultra-violence, criminality, and of a fanaticism even more extreme than that of previous years. A period during which I was regularly involved in fights and brawls, regularly arrested and appeared 'in the dock' - including for running that gang of thieves - and which period would end, perhaps inevitably, with me being sent to prison for a third time.

" Among the highlights of that NDFM year, for me, were the following. I smashed up (with one other NDFM member) an anti-apartheid exhibition, in Leeds (twice). I gave vitriolic extempore speeches at public meetings (some of which ended in violence when our opponents attacked). I waded into some Trade Union march or other, thumped a few people then stole and set fire to one of their banners (arrested, again). I arranged a meeting at Chapeltown, in Leeds (the heart of the Black community then) at which only five of us turned up, including Andrew Brons but not including Morrison. We faced a rather angry crowd of several hundred people, who threw bricks, stones, whatever, at us, and we few walked calmly right through them to our parked vehicles, and rather sedately drove away, our point made. No one said we could do it.

I spoke extempore at Speakers Corner in Hyde Park for around a half an hour to a crowd of over a thousand; it ended in a brawl...Finally, toward the end of that Summer, a meeting we had arranged on Leeds Town Hall steps resulted in a mass brawl when the crowd of around a thousand attacked us, after I had harangued them for around half an hour. Several Police officers were injured as they tried to break up the fights. I was arrested (again) but soon

was granted bail...

When my case came to trial, at Leeds Crown Court, I was accused of having "incited the crowd" and generally held responsible for most of the violence."

Everything I did in these years I justified to myself, and often to others, by invoking principles such as 'the survival of the fittest' and by the belief that in order to secure victory for the political cause I believed in, any and all means were justified, from violence to hatred to using rhetoric and propaganda in order to motivate people and gain recruits.

As for Column 88, involvement with that well-organised, now long-defunct, paramilitary group gave strength to my conviction that a National-Socialist victory was possible, for C88 had many overseas contacts, held regular meetings attended by young neo-nazis from all over Europe, and had among its British members not only many older professional people but also some members of the military. In addition, given its paramilitary nature and the paramilitary training undertaken, there was the knowledge that there were many others like me who were, under certain circumstances, prepared to use both physical and armed force in the service of our NS cause.

Thus I became aware that I and the few dedicated National-Socialists I had met in previous years in groups such as British Movement and the National Front were far from alone; that there were many other committed National-Socialists 'out there'. Which awareness, which practically acquired knowledge, not only strengthened my commitment to National-Socialism but which also strengthened my resolve to fight for 'the cause'.

There also developed in me during this time, and because of my involvement with C88, a realization that both covert action and terrorism were or might be useful tactics to employ in the struggle for victory, a struggle which I - extremist and fanatic that I was - accepted would be brutal, violent, and bloody, and thus possibly cost the lives of some of us, some of our opponents, and even some non-combatants. For I was during these years enthused and somewhat motivated by the rise to power of Hitler's NSDAP; a bloody, violent, struggle which had cost the lives of many comrades, from 'the fallen' of November 9th 1923 to Horst Wessel. I thus considered myself, and my comrades, as continuing that struggle - that struggle for the supremacy of the Aryan race, and the struggle against 'decadence' and our Communist, liberal, and Jewish enemies. In this struggle I personally - inspired by Savitri Devi's book *Lightning and The Sun* - considered the military defeat of The Third Reich, and the death of Adolf Hitler, as but temporary setbacks to be

avenged.

In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap [1], to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves.

While I enjoyed and then lived for political action - especially confrontation and brawls - and was motivated, fanatical, enough to speak extempore in public and take charge in a violent situations on the streets, and loved to plan such violence and motivate people to undertake it, I disliked the day-to-day organization and the (to me) petty manipulation that was, or seemed to me to be, the lot of an organizer and leader. I also lacked the charm, the charisma, the flexibility, a political organizer and leader needed.

In contrast to me, Eddy Morrison had a natural charisma, a certain charm, and was an experienced and adept organizer. He also, unlike me at the time, had a good sense of humour and was well-liked whereas I was probably more feared, or respected, because I was simply considered a nutter, a violent psycho. As a consequence, he was a natural leader; suited to leading the NDFM, and of all the people I knew at the time the most suited to organize and lead such a covert group especially given the fact that its ultimate purpose was to aid our NS cause. However, for all my attempts at persuasion he was uninterested in both C88 and in my ideas regarding covert action. He

also, beyond being a fan of horror stories and of the fiction of HP Lovecraft, had no interest whatsoever in the Occult. Thus I had to make do with someone else as organizer and 'leader' of this covert group, this person - then a comrade, a married businessman living near Manchester - being the one who had suggested the outer, the Occult, form of the group.

For some time, this underground group appeared to flourish, with some 'respectable' people recruited - initially a lecturer, a solicitor, a teacher, among others - with some of the recruits becoming converts to or in some way helping our political cause, and with such clandestine recruitment aided, later on, by some unexpected, non-factual, unwanted, publicity.

But what happened was that, over time and under the guidance of its mentor, the Occult and especially the hedonistic aspects came to dominate over the political and subversive intent, with the *raisons d'etat* of blackmail and persuasion, of recruiting useful, respectable, people thus lost. Hence, while I still considered, then and for quite some time afterwards, that the basic idea of such a subversive group, such a honeytrap, was sound, I gradually lost interest in this particular immoral honeytrap project until another spell in prison for an assortment of offences took me away from Leeds and my life as a violent neo-nazi activist [...]

### **Birth of A Theoretician of Terror**

It is perhaps fair to say - so far as I recall - that I was the one who, in C88, first broached the subject of using certain tactics such as improvised explosive devices and assassinations in a direct campaign against both our enemies and what I often then referred to as 'The System'. Prior to this - so far as I knew - training and discussions had been concerned with and were about possible future events, in particular a Soviet invasion of Western Europe, an invasion scenario which at that time (the early to middle 1970's, the Cold War era) was taken seriously by Western governments and Western military forces.

My basic idea - the plan - was to use such tactics to cause disruption, fear, and discontent, in order to provoke a revolutionary situation that our NS, our racist, our fascist, or anti-immigrant groups in general, might be able to take advantage of politically and otherwise; with part of this plan being to encourage the government to introduce more and more 'martial law' type control and regulations, which type of control and regulations (and surveillance) those in the military inclined toward a more authoritarian, or even fascist type, government might use to their advantage. For from such authoritarian or fascist type beginnings, National-Socialism might be covertly, gradually, introduced.

It needs to be remembered this was when 'the troubles' - armed conflict in Northern Ireland - was possibly at its most bloody, and which conflict, together with IRA attacks in mainland Britain, caused consternation and concern both in British government and in certain military circles, with some ordinary ranks, a few junior officers and even a one or two of the higher ranks covertly talking about a scenario when a military coup in Britain might be justified. Not that, so far as I with my limited knowledge know, this minority discontent among certain military - and perhaps a few intelligence - personnel ever become widely known or has even been mentioned in books, memoirs, or articles written about those times. But this discontent did capture a certain mood among certain people during that period, a mood I had some personal knowledge of, partly as a result of C88 contacts, partly as a result of some trips I made to Northern Ireland, and partly as result of other contacts such as squaddies involved with or supportive of right-wing groups.

Thus my ideas, my proposals, were to some extent grounded in the realities of those times. Times when disruptive industrial strikes and disputes were common in Britain, when the National Front could hold rallies and marches of thousands of people and had a membership possibly in excess of 10,000 members, when many more ordinary British citizens were, or seemed to be, generally supportive of the 'stop immigration, start repatriation' campaign, and when there was some support, or seemed to be some support, in certain military and even government circles for a more authoritarian approach to government.

I justified my ideas - the plan - and thus the use of such tactics by immorally believing and suggesting to others that in 'such dire times' victory could not be achieved without sacrifice and blood, and that for our people, our land, to survive and prosper it was necessary for some of us to be hard, ruthless; that 'history' showed that such ruthlessness was effective. And so on and so on. I do remember, on several occasions, idealizing the Roman Empire and ranting about how Rome built and maintained its Empire, its glory; not by negotiations, not by elections, not through a policy of peace and non-violence, but because ruthless men, hardened by war, had conquered, subdued and dealt severely with discontent and threats to 'the Roman way of life', to Rome, and to the Empire. Quite often I would quote some words of Hitler, from *Mein Kampf*, such as that the broad masses respond to what is strong and uncompromising; that a struggle on behalf of a weltanschauung has to be conducted by men of heroic spirit who are ready to sacrifice everything, and that if a people does not fight they do not deserve to live.

Hence, to me now, on reflexion, it does not seem to be hatred - of whatever type - that motivated those ideas, such a terrorist plan, of mine but rather a glorification of war, of strife; a belief in struggle, in 'the survival of the



fittest'; a naive desire to personally act based on idealistic notions of sacrifice and glory, of being part of a desperate struggle, a war, that began with Hitler and the NSDAP. Most of all, perhaps, there was the misguided feeling that 'our people' were under attack, threatened with slavery and then extinction, so that desperate, ruthless, measures were necessary to save them. A feeling that most certainly derived from the absolute conviction I then had that 'race' - one's idealized race - was the most important thing, so that this idealized, mythical, 'race' came before everything, and therefore (so the perverted reasoning went) what was moral was what aided and ensured the survival and prosperity of this 'race'.

As for practical consequences, then, I do not believe there were any, of significance, known to me. For I discovered little support for these ideas, this plan, probably for a quite simple reason, which was that the people in C88 disposed toward and trained for action preferred to concentrate on C88's stated aims and objectives: of being a practical bulwark in the event of a Soviet invasion or an internal Communist, extreme left-wing, revolution, and of slowly infiltrating National-Socialists into positions of influence within British society.

However, perhaps it was these ideas of mine, my enthusiasm for and rants about such action - to selected C88 people of course [2] - that later on resulted in a sort-of 'bomb making package' being produced by some of them (a package complete with several pairs of disposable surgical gloves), one of which packages was delivered to me, in Leeds, on my release from prison in 1976 but which I personally did not use given that shortly thereafter - for reasons outlined in *Myngath* - I, suffering from a loss of idealism, had a change of heart, and decided to become a monk in a Catholic monastery. A loss of idealism, a moral change, that would, however and unfortunately, not last that long.

Extracts from  
**Part Six: 1998-2002**

### **Conversion to Islam**

[...]

There was no sudden decision to convert to Islam. Rather, it was the culmination of a process that began a decade earlier with travels in the

Sahara Desert. During the decade before my conversion I regularly travelled abroad, with this travel including well-over a dozen visits to Egypt and a few visits to other lands where the majority of the population were Muslim.

Egypt, especially, enchanted me; and not because of the profundity of ancient monuments. Rather because of the people, their culture, and the land itself. How life, outside of Cairo, seemed to mostly cling to the Nile - small settlements, patches and strips of verdancy, beside the flowing water and hemmed in by dry desert. I loved the silence, the solitude, the heat, of the desert; the feeling of there being precariously balanced between life and death, dependant on carried water, food; the feeling of smallness, a minute and fragile speck of life; the vast panorama of sky. There was a purity there, human life in its essence, and it was so easy, so very easy, to feel in such a stark environment that there was, must be, a God, a Creator, who could decide if one lived or died.

Once, after a long trip into the Western Desert, I returned to Cairo to stay at some small quite run-down hotel: on one side, a Mosque, while not that far away on the other side was a night-club. A strange, quixotic, juxtaposition that seemed to capture something of the real modern Egypt. Of course, very early next morning the Adhaan from the mosque woke me. I did not mind. Indeed, I found it hauntingly beautiful and, strangely, not strange at all; as if it was some long-forgotten and happy memory, from childhood perhaps.

Once, I happened to be cycling from Cairo airport to the centre of the city as dawn broke, my route taking me past several Mosques. So timeless, so beautiful, the architecture, the minarets, framed by the rising sun...

Once, and many years before my conversion, I bought from a bookshop in Cairo a copy of the Quran containing the text in Arabic with a parallel English interpretation, and would occasionally read parts of it, and although I found several passages interesting, intriguing, I then had no desire, felt no need, to study Islam further. Similarly, the many friendly conversations I had with Egyptians during such travels - about their land, their culture, and occasionally about Islam - were for me just informative, only the interest of a curious outsider, and did not engender any desire to study such matters in detail.

However, all these experiences, of a decade and more, engendered in me a feeling which seemed to grow stronger year by year with every new trip. This was the feeling that somehow in some strange haunting way I belonged there, in such places, as part of such a culture. A feeling which caused me - some time after the tragic death of Sue (aged 39) from cancer in the early 1990's - to enrol on, and begin, an honours course in Arabic at a British

university [3].

Thus, suffice to say that a decade of such travel brought a feeling of familiarity and resonance with Egypt, its people, its culture, that land, and with the Islam that suffused it, so that when in the Summer of 1998 I seriously began to study Islam, to read Ahadith, Seerah, and the whole Quran, I had at least some context from practical experience. Furthermore, the more I studied Islam in England in those Summer months the more I felt, remembered, the sound of the beautiful Adhaan; remembered the desert - that ætherial purity, that sense of God, there; and remembered that haunting feeling of perhaps already belonging to such a culture, such a way of life.

Hence my conversion to Islam, then, in September of that year, seemed somehow fated, wyrdful.

### Notes

[1] Honeytrap meaning 'something that is tempting' - as in the modern usage of honeypot - and also something covert to attract/entrap a particular type of person. That is, a type of 'sting' operation. Thus, State-sponsored espionage is not implied.

This new life later on included entering the noviciate of a Catholic monastery, and which monastic experience led me to reform myself, at least in respect of immoral and criminal activities and thus in respect of involvement with such immoral honeytraps. However, this reformation then did not last, for as recounted here in Part Four, I had occasion, during the 1980's, to renew my association not only with some old C88 comrades but also with the mentor of that Occult honeytrap when, after of lapse of many years, I became involved again in neo-nazi politics and revived my project of using clandestine recruitment for 'the cause'. By this time, that Occult group had developed some useful contacts, especially in the academic world, so some friendly co-operation between us was agreed; a co-operation which continued, sporadically, until just before my conversion to Islam in 1998.

This clandestine recruitment of mine was for a small National-Socialist cadre which went by a variety of names, beginning with 'G7' (soon abandoned), then *The White Wolves* (c. 1993), and finally the *Aryan Resistance Movement* aka Aryan Liberation Army [qv. Part Five for details].

However, while some of these Occult contacts were, given their professions, occasionally useful 'to the cause' and to 'our people', by 1997 I had come to the conclusion that the problems such association with Occultism and occultists caused far outweighed the subversive advantages; a conclusion which led me to re-write and re-issue a much earlier article of mine entitled *Occultism and National-Socialism*, and which revised article was subsequently published in the compilation *Cosmic Reich* by Renaissance Press of New Zealand. As I wrote in that article - "National-Socialism and Occultism are fundamentally, and irretrievably, incompatible and opposed to each other."

By the Summer of 1998 I had abandoned not only such co-operation and contacts with such Occult groups but also such clandestine recruitment on behalf of National-Socialism,

concentrating instead on my Reichsfolk group and my 'revised' non-racist version of National-Socialism which I called 'ethical National-Socialism'. Later still, following my conversion to Islam, I was to reject even this version of National-Socialism.

[2] I recall one occasion, early on, trying to discuss my ideas - the plan - with C88's organizer in his home while, at my suggestion, very loud military music was played, from a Hi-Fi system, in the hope that it might drown out any covert listening or recording devices. Since the reality was that we could not hear what the other person said, that particular silly ploy of mine was very quickly discontinued.

[3] I soon left that university however, for personal and practical reasons to do with a romantic involvement with a lady who lived hundreds of miles away.

---

**cc David Myatt 2010-2012**



This work is covered by the Creative Commons (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0) License and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

---

---

## Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and represents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness.

For what I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certitude-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculine is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via pathei-mathos and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe, even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption.

Thus, and for instance, I sense - only sense - that peace (or the beginning thereof) might possibly just be not only the freedom from subsuming personal desires but also the freedom from striving for some supra-personal, abstract, impersonal, goal or goals. That is, a just-being, a flowing and a being-flowed. No subsuming concern with what-might-be or what-was. No lust for ideations; no quest for the violation of difference. Instead - a calmful waiting; just a listening, a seeing, a feeling, of what-is as those, as our, emanations of Life flow and change as they naturally flow and change, in, with, and beyond us: human, animal, of sea, soil, sky, Cosmos, and of Nature... But I am only dreaming, here in pathei-mathos-empathy-land where there is no past-present-future passing each of us with our future-past: only the numen presenced in each one of our so individual timeless human stories.

Yet, in that - this - other world, the scent of having understood remains, which is why I feel I now quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing certain allegations.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have

publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (*ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*.

David Myatt  
May 2012 ce

In Loving Memory of Frances, died 29<sup>th</sup> May 2006  
In Loving Memory of Sue, died 4<sup>th</sup> April 1993

---

Article source:  
[Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life](#)  
(pdf)

---

## A Premature Grieving

A recent occurrence, although expected for some years, saddened me expressing as it seemed to do something about our human physis; about how for so many people our physis does not seem to have evolved that much, if at all, despite our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos.

The occurrence was the publication of a report – by a well-financed, now Establishment, advocacy group – in two parts of which report I was repeatedly mentioned, with the author of those parts making various allegations about me for which he provided no evidence; who misattributed certain quotations to me; who made fundamental and multiple factual errors; who committed various logical fallacies; who was generally biased and dishonourable and who thus rather than promoting hope and fairness promoted old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

My resigned sadness was because for that author it was as if propaganda on behalf of some cause came before, was more important than, truth and empathy; as if there was for that author no personal belief in redemption, in the possibility of individuals changing for the better, except insofar – perchance – as such change was toward the cause he believed in; and thus as if the author was selective, judgemental, about those given the benefit of the doubt using the ideology of some cause, or their own prejudice, rather than humanity, as the criteria of judgement.

As I wrote in 2012:

"could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not – I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police."  
[1]

Instead of an empathic, a human, an honourable approach the author preferred propaganda, repeating the stereotyping he used almost two decades ago. Thus my extensive writings in the past eight years about rejecting all forms of extremism, my extensive and intensely personal writings regarding my struggle to reform myself as a result of pathei-mathos, were ignored. [2]

"Thus am I humbled, once more, by such knowing feeling of the burden made from my so heavy past; so many errors, mistakes. So many to humble me here, now, by such profusion as becomes prehension of centuries past and passing, bringing as such a passing does such gifts of they now long beyond life's ending who crafted from faith, feeling, experience, living, love, those so rich presents replete with meaning; presenting thus to us if only for a moment – fleeting as Thrush there feeding – that knowing of ourselves as beings who by empathy, life, gifts, and love, can cease to be some cause of suffering.

For no longer is there such a need – never was there such a need – to cause such suffering as we, especially I, have caused. For are not we thinking thoughtful beings – possessed of the numinous will to love?

But my words, my words – so unlike such musick [Dunstable: Preco preheminencie] – fail: such finite insubstantial things; such a weak conduit for that flowing of wordless feeling that, as such musick, betakes us far out beyond our causal selves to where we are, can be, should be, must be, the non-interfering beauty of a moment; a sublime life seeking only to so gently express that so gentle love that so much faith has sometimes so vainly so tried to capture, express, and manifest; as when that boyish man as monk past Compline knelt in gentleness to feel to become such peace, such a human happiness, as so many others have felt centuries past and present, one moment flowing so numinously to another." [3]

Yet, as I wrote some years ago,

"I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me.

Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (ex concessio) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason – only one – why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*." [4]

That I have now broken such self-imposed silence is the result of my resigned sadness regarding how far we mortals still have to travel to be able to live, en masse, empathic and compassionate lives, and of how so many individuals still – from whatever personal motive or because of some cause or ideology – promote old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

Perhaps the goddess Δίκη will touch some of those so many hostile individuals, for as Aeschylus wrote,

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει:  
τὸ μέλλον δ' , ἐπεὶ γένοιτ' , ἂν κλύοις: πρὸ χαιρέτω:  
ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.

"Δίκη favours someone learning from adversity:  
But I shall hear of what will be, after it comes into being:  
Before then, I leave it,  
Otherwise, it is the same as a premature grieving." [5]

Which is yet one more reason why I am still learning and still have far to travel, for that recent occurrence brought a premature grieving.

David Myatt  
Ash Wednesday 2019

[1] [A Matter of Honour](#).

[2] These writings include (i) [Just My Fallible Views, Again](#), (ii) [Understanding and Rejecting Extremism](#) (pdf), (iii) [Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos](#) (pdf), and the letters and essays included in (iv) [Such Respectful Wordful Offerings](#) (pdf).

[3] [Bright Berries, One Winter](#), written 22 December 2010.

[4] [Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing](#), written in 2012.

[5] Agamemnon, 250-253.

---



# A Matter of Honour

## Contents

- ° Preface
- ° Journalists, Allegations, and Propaganda
- ° The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study
- ° Conclusion
- ° Appendix: An Apposite Quotation

ooo

## Preface

Given the persistence of unsubstantiated rumours and allegations regarding involvement with Occultism, I deemed it necessary to publicly comment, in some detail, about the matter and thus provide 'my side of the story', and which public comment is based in part on some remarks included in early draft versions ( ≤ 9 ) of my autobiography *Myngath*.

However, as I note here in the conclusion, even though the matter is one of honour I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations to suddenly cease as a result of such comments by me, although I perhaps naively nurture a vague hope that what I write here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

David Myatt  
March 5th, 2012  
(Revised December 2012)

ooo

## Journalists, Allegations, and Propaganda

For many years - in fact up to and including the present - rumours and allegations concerning my involvement with practical occultism and satanism have been in circulation, and regularly referred to and repeated by journalists, and others, in newspapers, magazines, articles and, latterly, on that new medium - greatly susceptible to the spreading of dishonourable allegations and rumours - that has been termed the Internet. One of these allegations is that I am a certain person known as Anton Long.

In the past thirty-seven years only four people, on hearing or learning about such rumours and allegations, have had the decency to ask me, in person, "for my side of the story". The first was Colin Jordan, the second was John Tyndall, the third was Steve Sargent, and the fourth was a Muslim whom I came to

greatly admire and to whom I gave a personal pledge of loyalty.

I have, when asked in person, or via impersonal means of communication such as letters, always denied such allegations of such involvement, as I have, on numerous occasions, challenged anyone to provide evidence to support such accusations. No such evidence has ever been forthcoming <sup>[1]</sup>.

For instance, I was for several days, in early 2000, covertly filmed, photographed, and followed by an investigative team working for the BBC as part of their research for a Panorama programme about David Copeland and the London nail-bombings <sup>[2]</sup>. Prior to that surveillance, and for an ever longer period, I was also the subject of covert surveillance by a private investigator hired to undertake preliminary research for that BBC investigation. What did all this covert surveillance and investigation reveal? A satanist? No. Someone living an ordinary, rather boring, life with his wife and family in a small village near Malvern who went to work everyday on a bicycle to a nearby farm.



Covert surveillance photograph of me on my way back from work  
Taken by the BBC, 2000

In addition, since at least 1997 I have no doubt been under regular covert surveillance by Special Branch and MI5 – and especially so since 9/11 given some statements I made while a Muslim – with all my communications (internet, telephonic) monitored via GCHQ. Indeed, following my conversion to Islam and during the time I seemed to be, for the security services and the Police, 'a significant person of interest', I recall many meetings and friendly conversations with one of the Special Branch officers on attachment to the city near where I was then living.

Given such surveillance and interest, no doubt there are records somewhere of my activities as a neo-nazi extremist; of my subsequent life as a radical Muslim supporting Jihad, and finally of my life as a reclusive philosopher, a friend of σοφόν who seeks, through λόγος, to uncover – to understand – Being and

beings, and who thus suggests or proposes an ontology of Being. What there will not be, will be any records of 'Myatt as Satanist'.

As I mentioned in my article *Polemos Our Genesis* in respect of such surveillance:

"I have [since at least 1997] worked on the assumption that my communications are monitored, so I have restricted my internet and telephonic communications to friends, family, and to people I personally know or who are personally known to someone I trust. This means two things. That all I communicate is personal, open, transparent, and honest; and that if someone not belonging to this small circle of contacts claims to have had some communication from me - either sent with my name or sent using some pseudonym - then it is bogus."

In respect of rumours and allegations, I have, on a few occasions, challenged some individuals to a duel with deadly weapons, according to the etiquette of duelling. Not one of the individuals so challenged to a duel had the honour to accept, or issue a public apology in lieu of fighting such a duel.

As I wrote some thirteen or more years ago:

" I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated."

Such challenges, the lack of evidence to support the allegations and rumours, and the refusal of those so challenged to a duel of honour to either fight that duel of honour or issue an apology, reveals the truth of this particular matter - at least to those possessed of *arête*.

However, I quite understand why many people - journalists included - did in the past (and possibly still do) impersonally dislike or hate me, given my past and unethical support for, and my past propagation of neo-nazism, and my previous lamentable public incitement of hatred, intolerance, and violence. I was only reaping what I had sown. Thus I believe I also understand the motivation of those journalists and those authors who used rumours and allegations of involvement with Satanism to discredit me, for they were most probably only doing what they thought was necessary in the struggle against racism, extremism, and bigotry. But does that struggle - for what is ethical - justify their (in my view) unethical use of rumours and unproven allegations?

My own rather old-fashioned view is and was that a personal knowing of someone, extending over a period of many months if not a year or more, is the only honourable way to form a reasoned opinion about someone. For honour means the cultivation of traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and one of which virtues is that we strive to treat other human beings in a fair way; ignoring what others have said or written about them; ignoring their past (real or alleged); and giving them the benefit of the doubt unless and until direct personal experience, direct knowledge of them, reveals them to be dishonourable.

Instead of penning material based on such a personal knowing, it occurs to me that some journalists who wrote and published stories about me might knowingly or unknowingly have or had a somewhat prejudiced view, having put some political or personal agenda before veracity, and thence use their position and/or their influence (use the power of the Media) to propagate their opinion, their version of events, and belittle or otherwise denigrate persons they disliked or did not approve of because they viewed that person not in an empathic, non-judgemental way - as an individual human being whom they had taken the trouble to get to know - but in an impersonal abstract way according to some label or category they had assigned to that individual because of the alleged political or religious views of that individual. Thus, in my own case, they prejudged me - categorized me - as a 'fascist' or a 'nazi' or a 'satanist' - and since they disliked or hated fascists and nazis and considered satanists were immoral and 'evil', they adjudged me a reprehensible person whom they did not like.

Furthermore, in place of a personal knowing - and/or a scholarly research into the life and times of the person they intend to write about and lasting many months if not a year or more - they rely on certain journalistic practices in order to gather information. Practices such as: (1) bribing or persuading corrupt Police officers and government officials and others in order to obtain confidential information about individuals; (2) hacking/intercepting people's private telephonic/internet communications; (3) hiring private investigators to follow individuals and gather information about them; (4) hypocritically attempting to excuse such unethical conduct by making the spurious claim that what they write or say is 'in the public interest' when not only is this so-called 'public interest' an unethical abstraction but also when they as individuals would be offended if someone used such hack journalistic practices against them and their own family. Thus, and for example, a well-known anti-fascist organization could unethically obtain confidential information about its opponents by getting someone sympathetic to their cause in the civil service to obtain national insurance numbers, dates of birth, places of residence, and employment history; as they could employ the services of an unethical private investigator to obtain that and other information via corrupt officials and by covert surveillance.

The result of such journalistic practices, of such a lack of personal knowing, of

such a lack of scholarly research, and of such prejudgement of a person, is a hasty piece of work that - to paraphrase what a friend of mine once wrote - possibly says more about the journalist, more about our society, and more about the modern Media, than it does about the person who is the subject of such a piece of work.

In addition, and importantly, are those who in the past have prejudged me - who have written about me as a violent extremist - accepting of individual change, of the virtues of reformation and pardonance? Are they aware of my voluminous recent writings regarding my philosophy of pathei-mathos and those regarding my extremist past and my rejection of extremism? <sup>[3]</sup> Are they open to the possibility of my change and reformation? Or will they continue with 'the party line' and thus continue to insist that I am some sinister person whose recent mystical writings are just some sort of diabolical ploy?

More interestingly (perhaps) could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not - I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police.

### **The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study**

In a Master of Arts thesis entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles* a post-graduate student named Senholt made certain claims, and drew certain conclusions, in respect of myself and alleged involvement with the Occult group the 'order of nine angles'. One of his claims is that "the role of David Myatt is paramount to the whole creation and existence of the ONA."

Given that this thesis <sup>[4]</sup> is often cited as having 'proved' my involvement, I believe a brief overview of the claims, and proofs offered, seems to be in order, especially as - to my knowledge - it has not so far been subjected to a critical analysis.

A reading of the thesis reveals two interesting things. First, the use of and reliance upon secondary and tertiary sources, many of which are anonymous and many of which are derived from 'the world wide web', that most unreliable source of information. For example, he relies on the book *Black Sun* by Goodrick-Clarke even after admitting it contains errors and that the author offers no proof for the assumptions made in respect of me and the ONA <sup>[5]</sup>.

Second, that Senholt, undoubtedly inadvertently, commits the logical fallacy of incomplete evidence <sup>[6]</sup>. That is, the multitude of facts and circumstances which

do not support his contention about me and the ONA are omitted.

Thus, and in my view, the Senholt thesis, while interesting, does not meet the requirement, the criteria, of scholarship.

This criteria is essentially two-fold: (i) of detailed, meticulous, unbiased research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a period of some considerable time, usually a year or more in duration, and of necessity involving primary source material; and (ii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject therefore being not only the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired but also possessing a certain gravitas, just like genuine scholars.

His lack of primary research is evident in several factual errors. A few examples:

(1) He repeats Searchlight's claim that their 'expose' of me in the April 1998 issue of their magazine caused internal strife in the National Socialist groups I was then involved with, whereas it had no effect at all, other than to make people laugh, since few if anyone of the extremists in such groups ever took seriously anything stated in *Searchlight*. Instead, as their name for it indicated - *Searchlies* - they regarded it as "just more Jewish propaganda" and indeed as something of a badge of honour to be mentioned in it, with the general feeling being that 'if you get mentioned in *Searchlies* you must be doing something right!'

(2) He asserts that in 1998 the Police raided my home and arrested me. Which is correct. He then asserts that I was arrested again two years later, after the London nailbomb attacks, together with some other Combat 18 members. Which is incorrect. The facts being that I was not arrested in 2000, and that the 1998 raids were the ones that also involved some C18 and NSM members.

(3) He writes that: "His conversion did not escape the mainstream media, and most English newspapers and media-outlets wrote about the incident, including the BBC." In fact, as a search of media archives would have revealed, my conversion in 1998 was never mentioned until two years after the fact, and most of the media publicity in 2000 linking me with Copeland made no mention of it. But perhaps Senholt just meant to write something along the lines of 'the fact that Myatt was, at the time of Copeland's trial, a Muslim did not escape some of the mainstream media...'

Moving on to his claims that there are several things which link me with the ONA. All of these alleged links can be shown not only to be unsupported by the facts but also that they do not even amount, as Senholt states, to circumstantial evidence in support of the claim made that I am Anton Long. The claims are:

(1) The use of alternative dating systems, such as yf, by both me and the ONA.

The fact that group A and group B use the same or a similar alternative dating system is not proof that B is a subset of A, only of borrowing, imitation, adaptation, and possibly of plagiarism.

(2) Some occult texts with my name on them.

See the first part of 'omitted facts and circumstances', below - regarding using the occult as a neo-nazi honeytrap.

(3) That ONA insight roles included supporting neo-nazi groups and terrorism (neo-nazi and Islamic), things which I was openly involved with.

As with alternative dating systems and some ideas (such as acausality - see item (5) below) there is only a possible borrowing, imitation, adaptation, plagiarism.

Also, what is not mentioned are the other ONA insight roles which do not fit in with my life. Such as a police officer, assassin, and joining an anarchist group.

(4) That there is linguistic evidence linking my writings and those of 'Anton Long'.

No evidence from forensic linguistics is presented, so that this claim is just claim about two people using similar concepts and ideas and sometimes the same words.

That is, there is no direct evidence of a link, so that once again this is probably just others borrowing, imitating and adapting already existing ideas and concepts, something that, like plagiarism, happens all the time.

(5) That my departure from Islam (in 2009) coincided with 'Anton Long' writing a plethora of new ONA items.

Since Senholt does not give dates, and does not list the items, before and after this date, this is a rather vague assumption which also ignores two important facts. First, the vast quantity of literature I produced from 2006 onwards (following the suicide of my fiancée) in the form of essays about my Numinous Way/philosophy of patheismathos, letters, poetry, and so on. Second, Senholt does not discuss the fact that there were and are several self-confessed satanists (such as the pseudonymous Jason King) who are of opinion that most if not all of the newer, recent, items attributed to Anton Long were written

by someone quite different from the 'original Anton Long' associated with the original ONA (or ONA 1.0 as King described it).

(6) That some of my ideas and concepts - such as acausality and Aeons and Homo Galactica - are and have been used by the ONA.

These concepts date to the early to middle 1970's, evident in such non-occult writings as *Emanations of Urania*, and, later on, in my *Vindex - Destiny of the West*.

As an early advocate of copyleft, I have never been bothered by plagiarism or by others using and adapting my ideas and my 'inventions', such as The Star Game. Thus there is use and adaptation by others, and possibly plagiarism, but no proof of a direct link.

In most of the above cases there is also the established and the admitted fact up until 1998 I knew, as friends, some of the people involved with various occult groups, although - as mentioned to Professor Kaplan <sup>[7]</sup> and others - I did not share their views with us therefore agreeing to disagree on many things. Thus some allowed borrowing of ideas, concepts, and inventions, by such friends is hardly surprising.

Finally, the omitted facts and circumstances that do not support Senholt's claims and conclusions include:

(1) My publicly stated admission, made in the 1990's in correspondence with Professor Kaplan and others - and publicly repeated by me many times in the past ten and more years - that my occult involvement, such as it was in the 1970's and later, was for the singular purpose of subversion and infiltration in the cause of National-Socialism, with part of this being to spread racist ideas and denial of the holocaust. Thus one such occult group I associated with was a honeytrap, and the whole intent was political, revolutionary, not occult and not to with 'satanism'. It was a matter of using, or trying to use, such occult groups for a specific neo-nazi purpose without any interest in or personal involvement with the occult.

As I wrote in part two (1973-1975) of *Ethos of Extremism*:

" In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap, to attract



non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves [...]

But what happened was that, over time and under the guidance of its mentor, the Occult and especially the hedonistic aspects came to dominate over the political and subversive intent, with the *raisons d'etat* of blackmail and persuasion, of recruiting useful, respectable, people thus lost. Hence, while I still considered, then and for quite some time afterwards, that the basic idea of such a subversive group, such a honeytrap, was sound, I gradually lost interest in this particular immoral honeytrap project until another spell in prison for an assortment of offences took me away from Leeds and my life as a violent neo-nazi activist [...]

I had occasion, during the 1980's, to renew my association not only with some old C88 comrades but also with the mentor of that Occult honeytrap when, after of lapse of many years, I became involved again in neo-nazi politics and revived my project of using clandestine recruitment for 'the cause'. By this time, that Occult group had developed some useful contacts, especially in the academic world, so some friendly co-operation between us was agreed; a co-operation which continued, sporadically, until just before my conversion to Islam in 1998.

This clandestine recruitment of mine was for a small National-Socialist cadre which went by a variety of names, beginning with 'G7' (soon abandoned), then *The White Wolves* (c. 1993), and finally the *Aryan Resistance Movement* aka Aryan Liberation Army [qv. Part Five for details].

However, while some of these Occult contacts were, given their professions, occasionally useful 'to the cause' and to 'our people', by 1997 I had come to the conclusion that the problems such association with Occultism and occultists caused far outweighed the subversive advantages; a conclusion which led me to re-write and re-issue a much earlier article of mine entitled *Occultism and National-Socialism*, and which revised article was subsequently published in the compilation *Cosmic Reich* by Renaissance Press of New Zealand. As I wrote in that article - "National-Socialism and Occultism are fundamentally, and irretrievably, incompatible and opposed to each other."

By the Summer of 1998 I had abandoned not only such co-operation and contacts with such Occult groups but also such clandestine recruitment on behalf of National-Socialism, concentrating instead on my Reichsfolk group and my 'revised' non-racist version of National-Socialism which I called 'ethical National-Socialism'. Later still, following my conversion to Islam, I was to reject even this version of National-Socialism."

This explains many things, including early occult articles with my name - not the name 'Anton Long' - in zines such as *The Lamp of Thoth*, and the early version of *Copula cum Daemone* (which in fact was about the birth of Adolf Hitler). One question Senholt does not ask is why both my name and the name Anton Long occur on the same early texts, with the simple answer being that there were two different people, one of whom (me) ceased all involvement with such occult honeytraps in 1998.

(2) My time as a Christian monk and my writings praising Catholicism in particular and Christianity in general.

This does not fit in with the claim of me being a life-long 'devotee of extreme ideologies' or being a satanist, so it is ignored. No attempt was made to use primary sources - to talk to people who knew me as monk and who could recount my life then, and my autobiography *Myngath* where I recount my time as a monk.

No mention is made of my many articles in which I praise Catholicism or refer to it in a positive way. For example, my mention of the numinosity of the Latin Tridentine Mass [qv. *Concerning The Nature of Religion and The Nature of The Numinous Way*] and of the sacrament of confession. As I wrote in *Soli Deo Gloria*:

"It is my personal opinion that traditional Catholicism, with its Tridentine Mass and its particular conservative traditions, was a somewhat better, more harmonious, expression of the numinous (a necessary and relevant expression of the numinous), than both Protestantism and the reforms introduced by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and which reforms served only to undermine the numinous, to untwist the threads that held together its 'hidden soul of harmony'."

There is also the small matter of me being married in Church in accordance with the Christian ceremony of marriage. And the small matter of writings of mine such as *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*.

(3) My article *Occultism and National-Socialism* - written in the 1980's and republished in the 1990's and again around 2006 - and in which I denounced occultism, is ignored.

(4) My writings about National Socialism and Islam - spanning some three decades - are for the most part ignored, except when they are adduced to show I, as a nazi or as a Muslim, incited violence and possibly terrorism. Are they ignored because they in their quantity and content reveal they were written by someone who was at the time of their writing a dedicated neo-nazi and then a dedicated Muslim, and which dedication to such causes most certainly precludes being some sort of sinister person who was just using those causes for his own satanic ends?

In addition, and importantly, what are also overlooked are:

(a) The very real threat of being imprisoned for some of those writings - something surely only a genuine fanatic, a believer, would be prepared to do.

(b) My decades of political activism on behalf of National-Socialism, my two terms of imprisonment resulting from such activities, and my involvement with the paramilitary group Column 88. Which long-term activities over some thirty years, which imprisonment, and which paramilitary involvement surely indicate an inner - a rather fanatical - dedication to that cause.

(c) My travels, as a Muslim, to certain lands, the talks I gave to and the discussions I had with Muslims <sup>[8]</sup>, and my regular attendance at Mosques to pray with other Muslims, which would indicate someone who was, during those years, committed to that Way of Life.

(5) My semi-autobiographical poetry <sup>[9]</sup>, my published correspondence, and my ethical philosophy of The Numinous Way/philosophy of pathei-mathos, are completely ignored. Why are these voluminous writings and these ideas of mine ignored? Because they honestly reveal the thoughts and feelings and ideas and experiences and (importantly) the failings of someone so different from a satanist that they have to be ignored.

(6) My years of interior ethical and philosophical struggle to reform, to change, myself - documented in hundreds of letters, essays, poems, especially after the suicide of my fiancée in 2006 - are completely ignored. Why? Because they do not fit in with the idea, with the theory, of me being 'a deceitful, manipulative, sinister trickster', the archetypal satanist.<sup>[10]</sup>

It seems, therefore, that *some* of the facts of my life have been interpreted in order to fit a theory regarding some posited and ideal ONA member, with this interpreted ONA life - with inconvenient facts and circumstances conveniently omitted or ignored - then being held up as proof that I am Anton Long, since this truncated, re-interpreted, life of mine allegedly seems to fit in with the person Anton Long is alleged to be or is said to be according to his satanist writings or according to what some anonymous person has written on the World Wide Web.

In essence, there are no proofs presented in the thesis, with many aspects of my life omitted and with no mention, let alone analysis, of those voluminous writings of mine which portray a person almost the exact opposite of a satanist.

As one person wrote in respect of the rumour, the allegation, and the claim, that I am the pseudonymous Anton Long,

"We basically have a choice between: (i) believing Myatt is an astonishingly diabolical, duplicitous, creative, polymathical genius who over four decades has been playing 'sinister games' and who has not deviated from his youthful sinister cunning plan, and which diabolical genius makes the likes of Crowley and LaVey (and everyone else associated with modern Satanism and the 'left hand path') seem pathetic and mundane; or (ii) assuming Myatt has spent most of his adult life as a covert servant of the British state; or (iii) accepting that Myatt has lived a quite adventurous (but not an exceptionally amazing) life, has made mistakes, has suffered a personal tragedy, and has learned from and been changed by his experiences and by that tragedy [...]

Which of [these] three scenarios is therefore the most plausible? Which offers the most simple, the most rational, explanation for Myatt's peregrinations? Which require the pomp of conspiracy theory, and which involve superfluous causes, and (sometimes bizarre, sometimes astonishing) ad hoc assumptions and claims?" [11]

## **Conclusion**

In respect of allegations about involvement with satanism and 'being Anton Long' - and in respect of those who manufacture and propagate them - my own experience, my pathei-mathos, manifest in my philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, leads me to two conclusions. My first conclusion is that the research done by some modern authors and even some academics - whose works are published by reputable publishers or quoted by others engaged in academic research - is inadequate and does not meet the taxing criteria of scholarship. Thus these works are unreliable; they have no gravitas, no worth - in terms of learning - for the sagacious.

My second conclusion is that most if not all modern Media that concern themselves with the deeds and lives of individuals - from un-scholarly books and essays, to newspapers, to television news programs and political documentaries, to magazines, to the World Wide Web - are by their very impersonal and mass-media nature unethical. Why? Because they are un-numinous, and encourage and often embody hubris, being as they are the realm of personal opinions, hasty judgement, and misapprehension, and the abode of those for whom 'a story' or some personal/political agenda/prejudice or 'their career' or some unethical un-numinous abstraction (such as 'the public interest') come before honour, empathy, and the reasoned judgement of a personal knowing that has extended over a lengthy period of causal Time and/or been based on an extended period of scholarly research.

A corollary is that those who use such Media, and/or unscholarly books/essays, as sources of allegedly reliable information, as a guide, as *a* or as *the* basis for their judgement about and knowledge of someone or some many, are being

unfair and uncultured because lacking in the following necessary virtues: (1) a reasoned, balanced, and thus ethical, judgement; (2) the empathy of manifold direct personal contacts; and (3) a scholarly research and/or a personal knowing extending over many years. Virtues which are the genesis of a genuine understanding of, and thence an unbiased knowledge of, another human being; and virtues which rapid, impersonal, mass means of modern communication actively discourage and which virtues are seldom, it seems, cultivated and employed by those involved with and who use and who rely on such modern means for information.

Quite simply it is matter of honour. Of personal knowing. As I mentioned above, the traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and their cultivation are no longer the standard which individuals are expected to aspire to and to uphold. Thus I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations about me to suddenly cease, although I admit I do and perhaps naively nurture a vague hope that what I have written here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

As for who and what I really am, I can only suggest the curious read such writings of mine as the following: (a) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*; (b) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; and (c) *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

---

### Notes:

[1] Many people seem to rely on four items in respect of accusations of occult involvement. These items are: (1) an article published in 1998 in the Searchlight magazine entitled *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*; (2) a 2009 thesis by Senholt entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles*; (3) a chapter in Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (published in 2001); and (4) a 1974 interview I allegedly gave to a reporter.

(a) In respect of the Senholt, see the section in this article subtitled *The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study*.

(b) In respect of Goodrick-Clarke, his identification of me, in his book, as 'Anton Long' is solely based on his claim that I was the author of a manuscript entitled *Diablerie, Revelations of a Satanist* the only known copy of which is in the British Library. No evidence, no sources, are provided for this claim - this

assumption. Neither are any evidences or sources given for his other claims about me, such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" or that I was "a long time devotee of satanism."

In addition, Goodrick-Clarke never bothered to contact me regarding these claims of his, and the first thing I knew about them was when the book was published. Had he contacted me, then, I would have been in a position to supply him with the unpublished autobiographical MS that the plagiarist had purloined and used as the source for that fanciful work of fiction entitled *Diablerie*. An unpublished autobiographical MS that I circulated to a few friends, and a few 'interested parties', in the 1980's when I was engaged in writing *The Logic of History* from which the text *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* (published in 1984) derived. One of 'the interested parties' was the publisher of *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* who subsequently published some other pro-NS works of mine. An interesting overview of *Diablerie* is given in the 2012 e-text *A Sceptics Review of Diablerie*, by R. Parker.

It is interesting and - to me - relevant that among the many errors of Goodrick-Clarke are the following:

- i) I was not born in 1952, as he claimed.
- ii) I first met Colin Jordan in 1968, not 1969 as he claimed.
- iii) My two terms of imprisonment for political offences were not both for six months, as he claimed.
- iv) Morrison was never 'my follower' as Goodrick-Clarke claimed (Eddy was never anyone's follower).
- v) Morrison's first name is Eddy, not Eddie as Goodrick-Clarke claimed.
- vi) The Occult lady that 'Anton Long' met in the early 1970's did not 'lead the ONA' as Goodrick-Clark claimed, but rather the Camlad association, with the ONA being founded and then led by Anton Long himself following his meeting with that lady.
- vii) He mentions a certain Wulstram Tedder whom he claims was a former aide of Colin Jordan during the old NSM days, whereas 'W Tedder' was one of the noms-de-plume I used, for instance when writing for John Tyndall's *Spearhead* magazine in the 1980's.

It also interesting that Goodrick-Clarke was ignorant of - or did not bother to discover - many documented things about me during the late 1960's and the early 1970's, such as my arrest by the Yorkshire Regional Crime Squad for organizing a gang of thieves. Instead, the often fictitious account he gives of 'my life' during that time is almost entirely taken from the fictional *Diablerie* manuscript

Such errors, and the lack of evidence to support his assumptions about me, really say all that needs to be said about this particular 'source'.

Interestingly (perhaps) another fanciful work of fiction, similar to *Diablerie*, and purporting to be yet another autobiography by 'Anton Long' seems to have been

recently written by someone, possibly for financial gain resulting from selling it at some silly price to collectors of rare Occult memorabilia. The bulk of this new fictional 'autobiography' consists of an early (now out of date) edition of *Myngath* to which various fictional autobiographical stories and 'sinister' incidents and diatribes have been added in line with what might be expected from a mythical 'Anton Long'. Given that the majority of these autobiographical stories in this so-called *Bealuwes Gast* are quite risible and fanciful (and not fundamentally satanic at all), and given that the 'sinister diatribes' seem to have been cut-and-pasted from various internet articles attributed to those who over the years have used the nom-de-plume Anton Long, it seems unlikely that this forgery will ever be taken seriously by anyone. I mean - and to name just one risible example - who can take seriously a 'clockwork orange cult' and the wearing of white lab coats to boot...

Since this *Bealuwes Gast* also contains certain autobiographical information contained in private correspondence (e-mails) sent by me to a certain correspondent in 2009, I believe I know the identity of the author, or at least the identity of the person who supplied that private information to the author.

(c) In respect of the 1974 'interview', I reproduce a comment I made in part one of my *Autobiographical Notes*, first published in 2001:

" The journalist promised to let me read his final copy before it was published - a condition I had specified before giving the interview - and several photographs of me were taken, with him suggesting I hold something to do with the Occult, since he had noticed I had a collection of horror, and Occult, fiction (most of which in fact were given or loaned to me by Eddy Morrison). Perhaps foolishly, I agreed, holding up some Occult thingy which Joe Short had given to me a few days before. Our conversation lasted for about half an hour, during which the journalist took a few notes (it was not recorded).

I assumed that he would simply recount what I had said. Of course he neither showed me the article before publication, nor printed what I said, except for one short sentence about causing chaos. The journalist also made some rather silly allegations about animal sacrifice, which were investigated at the time by both the Police and the RSPCA whose conclusion was that they were fabrications concocted by the journalist, and perhaps, as I concluded, to get his name on the front page of the newspaper and sell more copies.

What surprised me (and to be honest, upset me, for a while), after this interview, was how so many people believed everything the journalist had written, without bothering to ask me for my side of the story. As if just because something was printed in some newspaper or other then "it must be true" or - as the cliché of mundanes goes: "there is no smoke without fire." And it was then that I learnt several valuable lessons: just how easily people can be manipulated, just how dishonest and conniving (and thus dishonourable) some journalists seemed to be, by nature; and just how powerful the established Media was, able make or break a person's reputation."

(d) In respect of the 1998 *Searchlight* item, I reproduce here a rather polemical

item written by me, the fanatic, in 1998 (during my extremist decades) just before my conversion to Islam and privately circulated to the few members of Reichsfolk. The item was subsequently re-issued - with some amendments and alterations made by Richard Stirling - in 2003 as a confidential supplement to the *Reichsfolk Situation Report* of that year.

" Not once, in the past thirty years, has anyone provided any evidence of my alleged involvement with the Order of Nine Angles or with Satanism in general [...]

All *Searchlight* has ever done is make unsubstantiated allegations [...]

One of the unsubstantiated allegations of the *Searchlight* crowd is that I was a friend of someone called Vik Norris - something they blandly stated in their alleged 'expose' of me, under the headline *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*, in the April 1998 issue of *Searchlight* magazine. No evidence for this allegation was presented then, or subsequently.

Indeed, the article simply contains bland assertions by them about me and Satanism with no evidence presented to support such assertions. For example: (1) they stated that the ONA was "formed by Myatt himself in the early 1980's" but offer no proof for this claim of theirs; (2) they write about "Myatt and his satanic friends" yet never name these alleged 'satanic' friends or provide any proof of involvement by any of my friends with Satanism; (3) they claim that "within days of being investigated", the ONA withdrew its material from the Internet and that I had shaved off my beard in an attempt to disguise myself, with yet again no evidence being provided for these allegations, which were patently untrue, as anyone could have verified at the time by searching the Internet, calling on me at my home or place of work or asking those with whom I worked.

Unsurprisingly, many people over the years have - for personal or political reasons - referenced this *Searchlight* article as 'proof' of my alleged involvement, when anyone of any sagacity on reading that and similar articles about me can rationally deduce that it and other such articles are merely malicious propaganda designed to discredit, but worded in such a dishonourable way that even were one to sue the authors for libel in a British civil court (assuming one had the money to do so) there would be no guarantee of success - a legalistic tactic such dishonourable journalists often rely on when they peddle their lies and make their malicious accusations.

As for me, I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated and their own dishonourable character proven."

[2] The completed BBC programme was broadcast, as a 'Panorama Special' entitled *The Nailbomber*, on the 30th June, 2000. Nick Lowles, who at the time was working for *Searchlight*, was listed as the associate producer.

[3] The recent writings of mine include the compilation *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, as well as voluminous essays about The Numinous Way/The Way of Pathei-Mathos, and which mystical Way of Life is one of compassion, empathy, humility, gentleness, and love.



As I wrote in *Letter To My Undiscovered Self*,

" The honest, the obvious, truth was that I – and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me – were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability – a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger – and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killing. Instead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind – we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed – were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia [...]

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I – with Sappho – not only say that,

I love delicate softness:  
For me, love has brought the brightness  
And the beauty of the Sun ....

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings. For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer."

As I wrote in *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*:

"There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness. "

[4] A revised and updated version of Senholt's thesis, under the title *Secret Identities in The Sinister Tradition*, is included in Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen: *The Devil's Party - Satanism in Modernity*, Oxford University Press, 2012. ISBN 9780199779246

[5] For my view on Goodrick-Clarke, see footnote 1.

[6] The logical fallacy of incomplete evidence is when material concerning or assumptions about a particular matter are selected and presented to support a particular argument or conclusion, while other material or assumptions which do not support, which contradict, the chosen argument or conclusion are withheld or not discussed. In effect, selective evidence and/or selective argument are used in order to 'prove' a particular point, with such selectivity being deliberate, or the result of fallacious reasoning or unscholarly research.

[7] Refer to footnote #51 of Kaplan's book *Nation and Race*. Northeastern University Press. 1998.

[8] Refer to Mark Weitzmann, *Anti-Semitism and Terrorism*, in Dienel, Hans-Liudger (ed), *Terrorism and the Internet: Threats, Target Groups, Deradicalisation Strategies*. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series, vol. 67. IOS Press, 2010. pp.16-17.

[9] The compilation *Relict* contains my selection of most of those poems, written between 1971 and 2012, that I feel are worth reading.

[10] Mention perhaps should also be made of my many writings about extremism, my extremist past, and my rejection of extremism, which post-date Senholt's thesis, and in which writings I have endeavoured to explore and understand the roots of both my extremism and of extremism itself. These writings include *The Development of The Numinous Way* (2012) and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (2012).

Other such writings are included in the more recent *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

Also of interest should be my seven-part retrospective and autobiographical text *The Ethos of Extremism, Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life*, and which "personal reflexions on my forty years of extremism may be of interest to a few people, especially given that, as a result of experience, a pathei-mathos, I have come to reject racism, National-Socialism, hatred, and all forms of extremism, having developed a personal weltanschauung, a non-religious numinous way, centred around empathy, compassion, fairness, and love."

[11] Wright, Julie. *David Myatt, Satanism, and the Order of Nine Angles*. e-text, 2012. Revised 2016.

---

#### **Appendix**

##### **An Apposite Quotation**

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me [...]

I quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing items alleging I am or was a 'satanist'.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included

being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (*ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*.

Source: *Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing*

---

---

## David Myatt - Selected Favourites

### Music

JS Bach:

Aria: *Erbarme Dich* (St Matthew Passion) [counter-tenor]  
Cantata: Aria - *Ich habe genug* BWV 82  
Cantata: *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust* BWV 170  
Cantata: *Gott hat alles wohlgemacht* BWV 35  
Cantata: *Widerstehe doch der Sünde* BWV 54  
Art of Fugue  
Well-Tempered Clavier, Book 1 BWV 846-869 [Rosalyn Tureck]  
Sonatas for Flute and Violin (BWV 1030-1035)  
Mass in B minor (BWV 232)  
Violin Concerto in D minor BWV 1052

Purcell:

*When I Am Laid in Earth* (sung by Emma Kirkby)  
*Music For A While* (sung by a young Alfred Deller)

Gregorian Chant: *Iste Confessor* (Sarum Office)

Josquin Desprez: *Kyrie* from *Missa L'homme Arme*

Chant Vieux-Roman: *Offertoire: Terra Tremuit*

John Dunstable: *Preco preheminencie*

Palestrina: *Magnificat* - Primi Toni; Tertii Toni

Thomas Tallis: *Miserere Nostri*

Allegri: *Miserere mei, Deus*

Brahms:

Fourth Symphony  
Piano: Opus 76, Opus 116-119  
Piano Concerto No 1 in D minor, Op 15

Chopin: *Etudes*, Opus 25

William Byrd:

Ave Verum Corpus  
Nunc Dimittis  
Tristitia et anxietas - Sed tu Domine

Phillipe de Monte: *Super Flumina Babylonis*

John Dowland:

Lachrimae Antiqua  
Burst Forth My Tears [Catherine King/Jacob Heringman/Rose Consort of Viols]

Joseph Haydn:

Late String Quartets  
*Die sieben letzten Worte unseres Erlösers am Kreuze* [Opus 51]  
Maestoso ed adagio

Albinoni: Concerto for Trumpet after Sonata da chiesa in D minor [Alison Balsom]

Georg Philipp Telemann: Les Janissaires

Mozart:

Piano Concerto no.20 in D minor, K.466  
Piano Concerto no.21 in C, K.467 [Dinu Lipatti]  
Sinfonia Concertante in E-flat major, K.364  
String Quartet in D minor, K.421

Symphonies 39, 40, 41  
Mass in C minor, K.427  
Requiem Mass in D minor

Schubert: Quartettsatz in C minor D703

Clara Schumann: Konzertsatz in F minor

Hildegard von Bingen:

O Eucharisti in Leta Via  
O clarissima mater  
Hodie aperuit  
Quia ergo femina  
O frondens virga  
O viridissima virga

Anonymous: Le Ditié de Jehanne d'Arc

Guillaume Dufay: Ecclesiae militantis

Sibelius: *The Swan of Tuonela*

Ξαρχάκος: *Βαρκαρόλα* [Αγνή Μπάλτσα, Μπουζούκι]

## Literature

Αισχύλου Ἀγαμέμνων  
Σοφοκλέους Ἀντιγόνη  
Σοφοκλέους Οἰδίπους Τύραννος  
Ομήρου Οδύσσεια  
M. Tullius Cicero - Epistulae ad Familiares  
Μάρκος Αὐρήλιος - Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν

## Films

Howards End (with Antony Hopkins)  
Out of Africa (with Meryl Streep)  
Shadowlands (with Antony Hopkins)  
Apollo 13  
The Cruel Sea (with Jack Hawkins)  
Sense and Sensibility (with Emma Thompson)  
Letter from an Unknown Woman (with Joan Fontaine)  
The Hours (with Nicole Kidman)  
The Remains Of The Day (with Emma Thompson)  
Carol (with Cate Blanchett)  
Charlotte Gray (with Cate Blanchett)  
The Salt Of The Earth (Juliano Ribeiro Salgado)

## TV Series

Inspector Morse  
Brideshead Revisited (with Anthony Andrews)  
Lewis  
Endeavour  
Lark Rise to Candleford  
The Great War (BBC documentary)  
Great War Diaries (BBC documentary)  
Pride and Prejudice (with Jennifer Ehle)

## Fiction

EM Forster: Howards End  
Charles Dickens: Bleak House  
Charles Dickens: Oliver Twist  
Charles Dickens: Nicholas Nickleby  
Flora Thompson: Lark Rise to Candleford  
Evelyn Waugh: Brideshead Revisited  
Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice

Modern Poet

TS Eliot

Poems

The Waste Land  
Little Gidding (Four Quartets)

---

**David Myatt**

**Understanding and Rejecting Extremism  
A Very Strange Peregrination**

Preface.

Part One. Towards Understanding Extremism - Some Notes From Personal Experience.

Part Two. A Learning From Grief.

Part Three. A Rejection of Extremism Perhaps Explained.

Appendix. Usage of Terms.

ooo

**Preface**

The first, and by far the shortest, part of this work contains some of my reflexions on, and some of my conclusions concerning, my forty years as a practical extremist and my forty years of practical experience of extremism and of other extremists; a practical experience that began in 1968 and ranged from fascism, and the racism of National-Socialism, to radical Islam, and which practical experience included founding and leading a political organization; producing propaganda, organizing activities and demonstrations, some of which ended in violence; speaking in public and participating in marches, demonstrations, and brawls; formulating extremist ideology; imprisonment for racist and other violence; participating in and recruiting for paramilitary activities; inciting hatred, violence and prejudice; engaging in criminal activities to fund extremist causes; encouraging and supporting terrorism; and so on.

My conclusions regarding extremism resulted from some years of moral, personal, and philosophical questioning and reflexion; a questioning whose genesis was a personal tragedy in 2006, and which questioning led me a few years later to reject all forms of extremism and develop my own weltanschauung - the philosophy of pathei-mathos - based on the virtues of empathy, compassion, and humility.

I make no claim concerning the originality, or concerning the correctness or the value or the importance of my conclusions about extremism. They are just my personal, and fallible, conclusions which - given my extremist past - may interest, or be of some use to, some people; and, being such personal conclusions, they are neither presented in an academic way nor are comparisons made with the work and the conclusions (academic or otherwise) of others about extremism.

Part two consists of transcriptions of some handwritten letters sent to a long standing friend following that tragedy in 2006. Since such personal correspondence is usually far more revealing - of personal views, motivations, and feelings - than some essay or other in which one pontificates about this or that, some readers may find this part more interesting and insightful than either part one or part three.

The third part consists of personal replies sent to individuals I did not personally know but who contacted me, between 2011 and 2012 and usually by e-mail, with questions about my extremist past, my 'numinous way', and my philosophy of pathei-mathos. These replies may thus serve to place into perspective my rejection of all forms of extremism and as well as elucidate the development of my weltanschauung from that 'numinous way' to the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

For publication, I have occasionally added some footnotes to such personal correspondence and replies, usually to provide a reference and/or a translation of some quotation.

I have outlined in an Appendix how I understand and use certain terms, since (i) my particular usage of some common terms may differ from how they are ordinarily used or how they have been previously defined and used in some academic and other works relating to extremism and its causes, and (ii) I occasionally employ certain terms developed for or used by my philosophy of pathei-mathos (such as separation-of-otherness, abstractions, and masculous).

David Myatt  
2013

---



## **Part One**

### **Towards Understanding Extremism Some Notes From Personal Experience**

#### **Harshness, Hatred, and The Separation-of-Otherness**

Some four years of reflexion concerning my forty years of experience have inclined me to consider that the genesis of extremism, and the making of extremists, may well be and may well involve three inter-related things: harshness, hatred, and what I term the-separation-of-otherness.

Thus, in my view, an extremist in active pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature, manifests a certain personal harshness, a certain propensity toward impersonal hatred, and makes not only a clear distinction between 'them' and 'us' but also between (i) some vision of or some belief in a particular past and (ii) the state of things now and how it is believed things will be, or should be, the immediate future. All of which predispose a person toward, or which can be used (by agitators, ideologues, fanatics, propagandists, leaders) to incite people toward, violence and - sometimes - toward terrorism.

The extremist therefore identifies with a particular category which is given certain characteristics or which is believed to be based on certain characteristics, and which category is invariably regarded - instinctively or otherwise - as either having a special (or even God-given) destiny or as being better than or superior to 'the others'. In case of racism, for example, the category is what is believed to be one's own particular ethnic group; in the case of radical nationalism, one's own particular country, land, or nation; in the case of radical Islam, of having the authentic interpretation and belonging with those who do adhere to that interpretation.

There thus exists, or develops, or there is cultivated, a distinct and a prideful sense of identity, dependant upon the belief - instinctive, or formulated in some manifesto, tract, doctrine, ideology, or dogma - that what exists now (society, or 'our way of life', for example) is under threat, and either (i) has deviated from a posited or some believed in ideal or idealized community/society/way of life that is said to have existed in the past or (ii) can and should move toward that new community/society/way of life demanded by the ideology, manifesto, tract, doctrine, dogma, ideologue, or interpretation.

This identity produces or can produce resentment, anger; caused by both (i) a perceived or a felt disparity between the now and the assumed ideal, past or future, and (ii) by the belief that someone or some many are responsible for the 'current state of affairs' and/or are preventing a return to, or the creation of, the ideal. For the problems or the conditions of the present are assumed, by extremists, to have certain identifiable and simple suprapersonal causes, just as the path to the goal is regarded as requiring that those causes be dealt with; with the causes of the problems often or mostly being the work of 'others'; not our fault, but instead the result of 'our enemies', and/or of some opposing ideology. That is, our enemies 'threaten' our way of life and/or are to blame.

Hence in order for extremists to return to this past perfection - or in order for them to create a new form of this past perfection, this past ideal, or in order for them to create a new perfection inspired by some past or newly posited ideal - the enemies, and/or opposing ideologies and those adhering to them, must be dealt with. There must therefore be struggle; the notion of future victory; and at the very least political/social/religious activity, and propaganda, directed toward political/social/religious goals; a moving toward regaining the authority, the power, the influence which supporters of, for example, an ideology

believe or assume they and their kind have lost and which they almost invariably believe are now 'in the hands of their enemies' and/or of traitors or 'heretics'.

All this combines to provide the extremist with a simplicity of purpose, for their life now has a meaning which - instinctive or otherwise - vivifies, removes doubt, with the result that the goal, the ideal, the ideology, is given or assumes a high priority in the life of the individual, often to the extent that they are prepared - even willing - to use violence, and actively hate their perceived enemies, 'the others', whom thus they, in their harshness and intolerance, have dehumanized.

### **Extremism, Ideation, and Abstractions**

Such violence, such hatred, such a dehumanizing of those deemed enemies with the consequent immoral denial of innocence [1], are inevitable consequences of all ideologies founded on notions of a prideful identity which glorify a past (real or idealized), which posit some future ideal or goal, and which involve a struggle against stated enemies to achieve such a goal or such an ideal.

For all extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions; in terms of

"...a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future." [2]

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'. For example, in nazism and neo-nazism, the basal ideation is the White (or the Aryan) race, so that for those who accept such a racial ideology a White or Aryan ideal (man and woman) exists, has existed, or should exist, with individuals judged or expected to judge themselves according to this standard and expected to strive to emulate or attain it; and with enemies (such as Jews - Zionists [3] - and Muslims) pejoratively contrasted with it, and thus viewed in a bigoted and a dehumanizing way. The individual, extremist or otherwise, is therefore required to accept - be subservient to - the judgement that the ideology asserts, or which some ideologue proclaims, is correct; for all ideologies denigrate or require (overtly or otherwise) the suspension of individual judgement either in favour of the collective, 'correct', ideological one, or in favour of the judgement of some leader, ideologue, or some 'higher authority'.

For there is the belief or the assumption, implicit in ideation, that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that posited ideal thing or form, with the additional assumption or belief that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things, and ideologies of whatever kind assert or claim that (i) it is this essence or ethos that the ideology - or some leader or ideologue - has revealed or does reveal, and (ii) this essence or ethos can and should inspire and motivate individuals to strive and struggle to implement, to make real, their posited ideal or ideals even if, or especially if, such striving and struggle involves conflict and violence.

### **The Masculous Extremist**

Given the foregoing, the extremist is a certain type of person; or at least, in my experience, the majority of extremists are: by nature, or become so through association with or because of the influence of others, or because of ideological indoctrination. This type of person has or develops not only a certainty-of-knowing about their cause, faith, or ideology, but also a need or an enthusiasm for territorial pride and personal aggression. In brief, they have or they develop an inflexible masculous character, often excessively so; and a character which expresses the masculous nature, the masculous ethos, of extremism. A character, a nature, unbalanced by muliebral virtues.

For it is in the nature of extremists that they disdain, and often despise, the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved over and above the desire for conflict, territorial identity, and for war. Thus we find in extremism a glorification of

the masculine at the expense of the muliebral; a definite personal certitude of knowing; a glorification of toughness and aggression and war; an aggressive territorial pride; a tendency to believe, or the forthright assertion, that 'might is right' and *kampf* is necessary; the desire to organize/control; a prominent desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition; and - especially in ideologues, fanatics, propagandists, agitators, and leaders - the love of manipulation through the charisma of words.

For extremism certainly manifests - and is an example, par excellence - of the love some people have or seem to need for the manipulation of others through words both spoken and written. As I have noted elsewhere: It is as if we terrans, en masse, have forgotten, keep forgetting, or have never discovered the wisdom that what involves too many words - and especially what involves or requires speeches, rhetoric, propaganda, dogma - is what obscures empathy and thus the numinosity that empathy reveals; the numinosity presented to us by the *pathei-mathos* of our human past; manifest to us - and living now - in the way of living of those whose personal *pathei-mathos* - whose personal experience of suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, of too many killings - has forever changed them. The 6

numinous revelation of kindness, of humility, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of being able to restrain, control, ourselves; of being able to comprehend our small, insignificant, place in the infinity of the Cosmos, bringing as this comprehension does an understanding of the importance, the numinosity, that is a shared and loyal love between two people: and revealing as this does the Cosmic unimportance of such wars and conflicts and such brutality as have blighted our terran history. [4]

### **A Cure For Extremism?**

Understood thus, extremism could be considered to be akin to bad (or rotten) individual physis [5]; as a manifestation of an unbalanced, an intemperate, psyche [6]; and as something which is or which has the potential to be contagious. Or, expressed less dramatically, extremism is a modern manifestation of hubris; of a lack of respect for, and a lack of appreciation of, the numinous. And, as hubris, is a manifestation of the error that is the genesis of the tyrant [7] as well as the genesis (in my view) of what has been termed the patriarchal ethos and in particular of how that ethos continues to not only survive but also still dominates the world.

It really does appear to be the case, as I perhaps somewhat controversially noted in a recent missive, that we men en masse have learnt nothing from the past four or five thousand years,

For the uncomfortable truth is that we, we men, are and have been the ones causing, needing, participating in, wars and conflicts. We - not women - are the cause of most of the suffering, death, destruction, hate, violence, brutality, and killing, that has occurred and which is still occurring, thousand year upon thousand year; just as we are the ones who seek to be - or who often need to be - prideful and 'in control'; and the ones who through greed or alleged need or because of some ideation have sought to exploit not only other human beings but the Earth itself. We are also masters of deception; of the lie. Cunning with our excuses, cunning in persuasion, and skilled at inciting hatred and violence. And yet we men have also shown ourselves to be, over thousands of years, valourous; capable of noble, selfless, deeds. Capable of doing what is fair and restraining ourselves from doing what is unethical. Capable of a great and a gentle love.

This paradox continues to perplex me. And I have no answers as to how we might change, reform, this paradoxical φύσις of ours, and so - perhaps - balance the suffering-causing masculine with the empathic muliebral and yet somehow in some way retain that which is the genesis of the valourous. And if we cannot do this, if we cannot somehow reform ourselves, can we terrans as a species survive, and do we deserve to? [4]

My only fallible suggestions are the empathy, the primacy of love and of *pathei-mathos*, and the appreciation of the numinous and of humility, that form the basis of my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, and which philosophy is only my attempt to express what I believe I have understood because of and from my own personal *pathei-mathos*.

ooo

### *Notes*

[1] My understanding of innocence is that it is an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

[2] The definition is taken from the glossary in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. ISBN 978-1484096642

[3] The term Zionist is often employed by contemporary neo-nazis as a euphemism for Jews, partly in order to try and circumvent racial hatred legislation in countries where such legislation is in force, and partly to try and avoid accusations of being a 'conspiracy theorist'.

[4] I use the term φύσις (physis) here in reference to the nature or the character of a person. As Heraclitus noted:

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίῃ ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

Fragment 112

[5] *Blue Reflected Starlight*. 2013

[6] Psyche is here used in reference to its classical origins and my philosophy of pathei-mathos; as an emanation, embodied in a fallible mortal, of Life qua being.

[7]

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:  
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,  
ἄ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,  
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'  
αἶψος ἀπότομον ὥρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκη  
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ  
χρῆται

Insolence [hubris] plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use

Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannus. vv.872ff

---

## Part Two

### A Learning From Grief Transcriptions Of Some Personal Letters

#### The Scent of Meadow Grass

Four days on from Fran's death, and I am in one of the ancient meadows on the Farm - soon, the haymaking will begin, again, but for now I can smell that special smell - the scent - of meadow grass growing in hot June Sun.

The varied grasses are at least knee high; often higher - and I startle a Deer, hiding, as I walk through the grass: up it leaps to bound and leap away to escape through a hole in the far hedge where the Oak, now full in leaf, rises so tall above me, only a faint breeze to disturb its leaves. Over the field, a Buzzard circles, occasionally calling while small Cumulus clouds drift under the blue sky of another English Summer. Around, over, the pond where I sit, Damsel flies, and two dark blue large Dragonflies, skitting, dancing, mating, landing - for the flow of life goes on.

Why such warm almost cloudless weather? It is not as if I wish my sadness, my grief, my guilt to be lifted and taken from me - but, still, a certain beauty touches me, bringing a few moments of peace. Shall I strive to push these aside, and remember, again, as yesterday when I walked through nettles, letting them sting my bare hands and arms? Now, a stripped yellow Dragonfly ventures forth over the pond - to be attacked, driven away by the Blue as two Blackbirds, tree dwelling and five hedge-Oaks apart, sing their varied, long-lasting songs, for the flow of living goes on.

So many Damsel flies, now, I have lost count, and, then, a Ruddy Darter lands on a leaf, feet from my feet. For minutes, it is still, as, around me, Bumblebees and fastly-moving, loud, flies pass by in their seemingly random way. On a nearby fallen branch - some small, glossy, black, winged insect scoops out dead wood with its legs, having made a perfectly round, small, hole above the sunken leaf litter where black Beetles scutter, to dive down to what is their deep. Then, a Bumblebee drops, stumbly, briefly, down to the very edge, as if to drink, for the flow of life goes on.

Is there meaning, for me, here? It would seem so in these brief moments - and yet, and yet there is no Fran to return to, no Fran sitting here, sharing such moments. But is she, in some indefinable numinous way, here beyond the bounds of memory, Time, grief, and thought? I do not know, only knowing a certain vague, mysterious feeling, which might just be imagination. Now, I must arise and walk: no sleep, here, as in the years gone by when I would lie down among this warm grass to feel the peace that lives in such a place as this.

June 2006

ooo

## **Bright Purple Orchids**

It is just over one month since I sat on this hill - then, it was also in the Sun of an early Summer's morning, and only a few days after Francine had killed herself, tormented as she was by despair, anguish and a deep self-deprecation. For I called her Francine - and she liked it - since it seemed to capture something of her quixotic, individual, nature which the names Frances and Fran did not really express. Now, as in the past when she was alive, I find myself still saying to myself - and sometimes out loud - "I love you Francine," as if it were some mantra that might bring her back to life.

But, yet again, I am alone - here, where there are bright purple Orchids on the lower slopes just above the tree-line and where, below, a Deer stood on the narrow footpath, watching me approach until, apparently unafraid, it sauntered off into the bushes growing by and beyond the stream that runs down through that quite small wooded valley. Overhead - the resident Buzzard, calling. Around - flies, starting their day as the warmth of the Sun increases to slowly dispel the clinging mist that lingers cloud-like over the flat land between those not-too-distant hills.

The stark cry of a Woodpecker, as it flies, dipping, from tree to tree. The loud Bumblebee, feeding on the many small flowers - blue, yellow, violet, red. The many birds - whose personal names I do not and probably never shall know - singing, in the many trees and bushes below, up from where there is a small clearing, gently rising as the hill beyond, and in which clearing two chestnut horses graze, half a mile or more from the nearest cottage whose white walls and faded-red roof break the swathe of green which, furlong upon furlong, reaches up to the very top of the hill, making my horizon: fields of pasture; hedges bursting with English-summer green The ferns, since my last visit, are fully open, and almost all stretched fully out, and I sit on an old plastic bag, feeling the tragedy of Francine's death, and that I should be crying far more than I am now. For the tears, hours upon hour, day following day, hav lessened, until - yesterday - I wept only once. So I feel guilty, partly believing I should be mourning her far more. But Nature, here, is alive and I have begun to sense again the flow of Life, sensing somehow and strangely - and hoping it is not some delusion - that she, by her dying has given me this gift, this chance; these moments to reconnect myself with Life. A chance to redeem and be redeemed, to feel the beauty and the goodness inherent in life and to know, to deeply feel, the promise of human existence - as if she by her living and her dying has not only freed herself from her own inner pain, anguish and torment, but also finally, irretrievably, freed me from that lower part of myself that still kept me in thrall, even sometimes during our relationship, to abstractions, to a wayward questing after suffering-causing ideals.

So I am embodied, here, by my being, my thoughts, my feeling - as I sense she is, and somehow alive if I feel this, if I remember this, her, if I change; if I make her sacrifice worthwhile. For there is a depth not felt before; never quite experienced like this before; a depth of feeling; a depth of being; a deep connexion with Life, especially as it presences itself, here, around me, in me, on this hill, site of an ancient hill-fort - as if the sadness and the sorrow and the tragedy have been transformed, melded somehow with the quiet reverential joy of being in such a beautiful, still numinous aspect of Nature, to form something new,

strange, far beyond words, bringing a definite knowing of myself, of my failure, a knowing of humility never known before. Thus there is a letting-be; a simple dwelling through sitting in silence and in peace, exhaling wordless and wordfull words of love. Change, life, death - all around; all here, and one day I also shall change as my beautiful Francine has changed. No fear, now; only that knowing that knows the flow for the changing it is.

Yet do such feelings, such thoughts, demean her death? Or are they merely some escape or delusion? I do not really know - I never probably will know for certain - but I hope not, even as I know I might be mistaken, in this. But this is all I have: this, the result of my month of effort, the month of tears - these slight answers; these meagre answers; these so slight positive feelings, feelings which may fade, which could fade, bringing back such anguish as caused so many thoughts of bringing forward death. For over a month, a struggle to find answers to the questions, the despair, which perplexed and often almost overwhelmed me. Faith; prayer; redemption - seeking to believe; needing to believe; desiring to pray, trying to pray. Trying again to find the answers in God; in Christianity, in Buddhism, in Taoism, in Islam, and in and from many other Ways.

But there is now, for me it seems, only the quiet sitting in places such as this; only the answers of, the development of, The Numinous Way. Only the feeling of being one connexion; only the yearning to presence the good, to cease to cause suffering; to strive to keep that silence, that non-interference, which which may well be the beginning of my own redemption and a move toward, back, to being in balance with Nature, with the Cosmos, with myself - and with the Fran who has gone, leaving me behind.

There is, here, only sky, trees, hill, and history - and no one to share such beauty, such warmth of Summer Sun. No one to lie beside and feel the yearning for that short sleep which often overcomes us in a such heat as this.

Instead - a small brown spotted Butterfly passes; then, an even smaller one of brown-orange with black spots on its wings, and then a larger white of black-tipped wings. So many flowers to feed, upon - and the heat of the Sun has taken those almost-annoying flies off, away, perhaps bushward into shade, leaving me free to rest in my new strange sad-tragic-quiet-reverential-remorseful-joy while a small Cumulus cloud in an otherwise cloudless sky drifts above, to my right, making faces. A sad face; then of anger then of joy - until it, too, becomes almost formless here in this flicker of Life which passes quickly upon one planet in one Galaxy among a Cosmos, changing slowly, as it does.

So many flowers; and Grasshoppers, calling, in the longer grass, above where three Crows caw, as they caw. So much Life, bursting, burgeoning, forth, to mingle as I become mingled with a future and a past, one connexion among so many where, ten feet away, the wind-shaped sapling of Oak, no taller than a three Rabbits, hopping, curves gracefully out over lichen-covered rock.

June 29, 2006

ooo

## **Existence Without End**

This afternoon is hot, following the long hours of rain during the night, but there is a lovely breeze as the Sun dries the Clover-filled grass where I sit resisting the temptation to sleep, stretched out, warm.

For it is so beautifully warm, this Sun, taking away for a while the sadness of the sleepless night when dreams and memories of Fran kept me, often weeping and often silently hunched by the window, listening to the rain. No music of mine, then, as I yearned to capture, to express, the almost despairing sadness of it all. There were only words; only words such as these, and not for the first time I gently envied those gifted with the talent of musical composition. But no words can express what the sounds of numinous music can and sometimes have expressed, and I was left to sigh and close my eyes to try and dream such memories of happier days as have kept me alive as the days since her death turned first to a week and then to a month, no God to bring forth the comfort and the love so desired, so needed in the bleakness of that, of this, long night.

But this Sun brings something, while it lasts - something strange: a quite quiet remembrance of the joys and beauty of life when personal love lived to suffuse us with both happiness and dreams - no death to tear us apart. Yet how many times, how often and how stupidly, did I turn away from the sharing of such love - from its value, its humanity, its goodness known only, valued only, felt only, with its loss, with such a loss as this? Turned away from - for what? Some hard, unforgiving, inhuman ideal. Turned away from - too many times these past thirty years so that a storm now wells up inside me as the clouds of the night grew, waiting to break in a tempest of tears. So stupid, the man that I was, and maybe still am.

Swallows, sweeping low over the grass; a Honey-Bee, feeding, from the clover. A small Fly, by my hand. All emanations of that flow of Life which lives, presenced on this planet which is both a dwelling and a home.

Someday I - all this, here: the Fly, the Bee, the birds; the Clover - will be gone, as she is gone and as the Cumulus clouds that now drift past the hill will be gone. Gone - to where? Returned; continued; lost. changed... And what remains, of us? I do not know, and can only suggest or presume.

Yet there is something, here; some feeling, burgeoning in Sun - of Life in its essence; of consciousness, living, of compassion, love; droplets forming one whole, one river flowing from one source to one end in one sea in one moment of one Time. Thus, a brief smile, a knowing of moments where the I is at least lost as it become lost in the happiness of such sharing as love makes. No God - but a warmth of being flowing from one small beginning to one Cosmic existence without end.

Yes - she is there; as I, the Bee, the Fly, the Clover, the Swallow, the rain, the river, will be there, transformed, transmuted, one infinitesimal emanation of Thought among so many where the Cosmos evolves to be, there, where Time shall never end. Am I dreaming - or just listening to, feeling, the quiet soft emanations of a Cosmos dreaming, breathing, seeing, being, existing in both the sadness and the love?

Now, thinking ended, I can drift into that warm sleep that so often heals... And then, for a moment, such peace it is as if the joy of death reached out to touch me, claim me. Is this, then, what touches some in that their last moment of decision? For it feels as if it is the dying which is easy - and the living which is, which can be, which will be, hard, as the despair, the burdens remain to reclaim them, me, us. But have I strength enough, dreams enough, hope enough to help me here? Yes, perhaps I have again, for a while...

Afternoon of 6th July, 2006

ooo

### **The Joy-bringing Sky-blue**

A wonderfully warm and sunny day with no clouds to cover the joy-bringing sky-blue. The Sun was warm even as it ascended, early, while I cycled rural lanes almost totally devoid of traffic because of being Sunday, and early. So pleasing, this simple joy of an English morning in late late Summer when I - tired from hours of work yesterday - leant against a fence to just-be in each slowly passing moment. Such peace, as if the measure of life was at last not only known but felt, lived, loved, when no human-made noise intrudes and one feels the strength, the giving, of the Sun; feels the growing that is in the fields, trees, bush, hedge, as if they are all - as they are - connected, parts of one living, growing, presence; one living-being, breathing... So much, so much so simply known and felt as warmth and the natural silence brings a sleepy calm and there is the brief-sleep of lying in warming welcoming grass before one awakes to feel all living-life knowing thus human-caused suffering for the blight, the stupidity, that it is.

To be, to let-be, to leave-alone is it seems an answer - and so I am slowly, so slowly, returned to my dwelling where now, three hours later, I sit on the grass in the garden feeling knowing my weakness of months years decades past.

So I am haunted, here and again, where again the Swallows gather as they gather at this time of year: chirping to each other and preparing in some weeks to leave. Thus do they skim the fields, catching, eating, their food as the cycle of natural life upwardly repeats and a cooling breeze dims a little of the humid heat of the day, here in a greening part of a still-living England.

Haunted, here and again - amid such joyful growing warmth - with, by, because of, her death; with by, because of, the multiplicity of my multitudes of suffering-causing and so stupid mistakes...

3rd of August 2006

ooo

### **The Sun of Mid-September**

A small black winged insect lands on my knee as I sit on the grass waiting, to write - I do not know what this insect is, but it is slowly cleaning its long antennae and then its wings which briefly catch the Sun and iridess. Such complexity, in miniature - such life, living, as it lives.

It is just past mid-September and warm, very warm, with small Cumulus clouds beneath a joyful sky of blue and I am awake, it seems, at last, from the daily dream of the past six or more weeks when I sleep-walked through life to wake only briefly, so briefly, to cry unexpected as when I two days ago walked one narrow path where trees reared up, arching over as some cathedral isle, and bright morning sunlight filtered and fractured to touch me, the ground, the life that grew, seeping, around. I cried then such tears as saw me crouched, hunched up, then kneeling - feeling the sorrowful tragedy of her loss, her dying: of my mistakes. A sorrow which the wakeing-dreaming-sleep of those past weeks kept me distant from as I, again and foolishly, meddled, wrote, postured, to keep pain and experience away through a desire, a hope, to believe; through the gestures and words of prayer; through articles written. For I had felt again that I knew; that I had words to issue forth - some role again to help me live and keep such life as mine alive beyond that tragedy of self-inflicted death.

Such tears began to break such illusion, such wakeing-dreams, down. Now - so green this grass, so warm this Sun of mid-September that I cannot sleep or hold this role any longer. There is, can be, nothing but the flow of life which I as one living being cannot hope to contain, constrain, for I am, in being, no-one and nothing; only one fleeting flicker of life as that insect, living, flickers briefly to fly away lost to sight under Sun.

There are images, of Space, to remember: one nexion, here, sitting upon grass, among the billions presenced here on one planet orbiting one star in one Galaxy among billions. So many, so many - that I am become again what I am, was, one fallen leaf drifting, flowing down one stream in one field in one land on this one planet among so many. I have no power to really change what-is, what-was; no power of bringing-into-being; no power to even really know; only living, breathing, dying.

So there is a smile, fine words flowing of knowing not to cause suffering again - words written before this failure, born from weakness. For I know my failure, here, these past weeks - no excuse, not even that wordless, strong, desire to live beyond the grief, beyond the nothingness without her, beyond the faith that clung to life, hoping for redemption in a total loyal submission to the one God beyond all gods. Such loyalty is troubling, still... But it is the warmth of Sun, the green of grass, that brings me back, for there is only the brief touching of such beauty as we can find, discover, know; only the thin, faint, hope to somehow bear and carry this to others - to pass the numinous knowing on so that someone, somewhere, somewhen can transcend, themselves, feeling the living matrix, beyond, where in ending we merge, again, one being-become.

All else is insufficient, illusion, delusion, for there is what there is. Yet I am weak, worn out from experience, loss upon loss, mistake following mistake, so there is, shall be, can be, only a living from moment to moment; no plans to follow then deny; no aims to strive or hope for.

The Swallows of Summer have gone, and I smile as I run my hand through the warming, growing, grass in this field where the breeze does not move the acorn as it falls, tree to ground, here by the pond set and drying below leaf-shedding Willow. My tears can never fill this - and it might be good to die now, in this peaceful warmth as the Crane flies rise to stumble to briefly live before life leaves them without a knowing such as this.

So, there is now only the living of existence; only the quiet slow semi-joyful waiting for this life to slowly, quickly, painless or with pain, dimly end to be returned, perchance transformed. Only being, beyond desire: one cloud but briefly passing making many faces under Sun...

September 2006

ooo

### **Crouched Up Over Muddied Earth**

Who is there to hear the words of remorse, to see, feel, such tears of anguish as bring me down, crouched up over muddied earth? Who - if there is no God, no Saviour, no Heaven, Paradise, and no personal life beyond that ending which is death?

Who hears? Who can forgive? She who could, might, is gone, dead, lost to me and to life, and here - on this wooded hillside where the strong breeze creeks trees and fastly scuttles cloud - there is only a faint hope: dim, as the dimness on the far horizon where the Sun is still nearly one whole hour from rising. It would be good to believe - as I tend to believe, as I tend to hope - that the Life, the living-beings, here can and do hear, and can and could respond. But I am only one being, one human, for them - tree, bird, deer, rabbit, the very hill itself - to be wary of as they, each in their life in their own way, are wary, and even the two Ravens, prukking as they skim the trees above, are only Ravens. No omens, there. So there



seems only fantasy while I whisper, slowly, to the life that lives here. No answers; no answers: only the breeze bringing darker clouds, and rain.

Here, among brambles, I sit where the fallen leaves of Oak, Ash, have covered the grass, and the breeze no longer carries the sound of a distant traffic-filled road. For it is Sunday, and still, with only this human who stirs in the gibbony gloom of Dawn on a Winter's day warm for the time of year.

Soon, there will be weariness to take me back along the muddied path that seeps over hill - no one to meet, walking, while such earliness lasts. And it is good, this solitary silence - once, a few times, I have, being late, seen strangers approaching, and shyly, wary like an animal, have crept away into woods, or beyond some hedge, keeping thus my own strange company: no human words to break the bleakness or the slight joyfulness of mood.

So there is a kind of living, a kind of thinking, for me - seven months beyond her death, with no religious faith, belief, to bring me company. Thus, I am alone, again. And yet, there is this, this being-here, where the rain washes away the tears that some leaves briefly held after they fell as they fell from one man, anguished in one moment of one walk on one day one warmish Winter. No bright Sun, today, rising over hill: although somehow, for some reason, there comes that slow muted joy to bring a slight brief smile - for there is Life, around, beings living as they live; one future, one present, to connect one consciousness since I am a living in illusion.

So brief, the insight, and I am become again one man ambling toward old age, slowly climbing with my Ash walking-stick the steep slope of a hill.

Soon, there will be tea, toast, a seat by the window, as the rain of dull day beats down, again. So brief, that insight: but sufficient as often to keep me dreaming, replete, for many hours, today...

December 2006

ooo

## **A Time To Reflect**

A time to reflect as I - tired from long days of manual work - sit in the garden watching the clouds clear to bring some warm Sun on this windy day of a coldish wind. On the horizon to the South: Cumulus clouds billowing up to herald more showers, and I, for a moment as a child again, watch a few cloud-faces change to disperse; as if the clouds are for that moment, just that one moment, a memory of a person who lived, once, on this Earth: reaching out to be remembered as they the cloud move as they are moved in their so-brief and new existence.

The hedgerows are greening; the branches of trees coming into leaf, and life is renewed while I wait for the Swallows to return, here, to this Farm. This is Life: in its purest truth devoid of the empathy-destroying, suffering-causing, abstractions that we humans have manufactured to blight this planet and so grievously injure our fecund still beautiful but now suffering Mother Earth who gives us, and who gave us, life.

The brief warm Sun renews as it almost always does for me, and so - for this moment, this one moment - I am happy, again; feeling the measure of Meaning, of happiness, of joy itself; which is in a simple just-being, sans abstractions, sans thought, and beyond the dependency of, the addiction to, anger.....

Here - the child, again; free to watch the bee bumble from flower to flower; free to feel a certain playful awe. Here, the concern with only what is seen, touched, known, smelt, in the immediacy of dwelling.

There should be nothing more; nothing to wreck such simple being; nothing to bring the-suffering. But I, we, are stupid, weak, vain, addicted - and so in our failing repeat and repeat and repeat the same mistakes, and so cause and maintain the pain of our, of their, of other, suffering. Mea Culpa; Mea Culpa; Mea Maxima Culpa...

April 2007

ooo

## **Almost Mid-Summer**

Another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with the light remembered from childhood years in Africa and the Far East: so different from the normally dullish light of temperate England.

Thus, here in the warm Sun and as so often, there is a time of reflexion; a stasis as life becomes reviewed through memories. And it is occurring to me more and more that this is all that there is, beyond the immediacy of the moment: only memories of moments past.

So many memories which slowly fade as bright colour exposed to Sun: as the bright checks of my Tweed cap have slowly faded over the years, unrenewed as the greens of the grass, the bush, the tree, become renewed each year, through Spring. Only memories, as of Fran; to be savoured but perhaps now not too much to be dwelt upon in almost unbearable sadness, for thus is – for thus has the – a type of balance returned; that balance, that dwelling in immediacy, which I from learning feel and know is the essence of wu-wei.

This is a change within me, regarding the life and death of Fran, and the life and death of Sue; regarding my own diverse journeys and explorations. A change toward a being-settled that has partly arisen from at last forsaking abstractions and partly from accepting that it is immediacy and remembrance of memories which convey the only correct meaning we human beings have or can find and which is numinous. No projection, thus, of an abstractive life-beyond this mortal life; no need for a religious type of faith; no battle or desire to strive to be in accord with any abstraction; and even no need to believe in, or even un-numinously desire, some-thing. No depth of unfathomable wordless sadness to bring that ultimate life-ending despair such as I assume Fran felt in the last hours of her own mortal living.

For there is only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled there in the old Orchard of old Apple trees whose lower branches have been windfallen, or become broken with age, or stripped of bark by the two Goats who roam there, where Chickens range, food-seeking. Only the passing billowing fair-weather white Cumulus clouds below the sky-blue of Earth's earthly mortal life.

Across from where I sit – at the back of the Farmhouse – that Barn whose Summer Swallows swoop in and out to feed their still nesting young who gape and chatter as their food is brought. And I am only this moment, only this moment, as the young Farm dog who comes to lay down in the grass beside me is only the young Farm dog. He looks up at me once – three times – tail wagging, before settling down to sleep.

There is no world beyond, for us here; for the life here. Only the weather; only the changing weather; only some natural need to move us, slowly by our limbs. A need for shelter, water, food. Only the Seasons changing as they change. Only the gentle companionship of a gentle acceptance that lives, grows, changes, slowly, as all natural life lives, grows – changes – slowly, as Sun through cloudless Summer sky.

My decades long mistake of unbalanced stupidity has been to be un-rooted; to be of unnatural unneeded haste. To cease to dwell within each immediacy of each moment. To be swayed by, persuaded by, in thrall to – to even love – un-numinous and thus un-ethical abstractions. To be thus that which we human beings have become: a stage between animal – talking – and compassionate, empathic being aware of and treasuring each small pulse of life that lives near, within, us because there is no separation unless we in hubris and by abstraction create such separation.

Thus are we now struggling, halting, wasting ourselves and all of Life around us; infected now with the virus of abstractions so that, upon this living Earth, we – in our new de-evolution – despoil, disrupt, destroy the Life that is our Life and the genesis of The Numinous, often in the name of that un-ethical abstraction called “progress”. And yet we have a cure for our millennia-long debilitating sickness; have always had a cure, although so many for so long, as I, have failed in our blind stupidity to see it.

So, this is all that there is: only the bright Sun; the slight breeze in bush and tree; the verdant, living, green of grass; the yellow Buttercups that are profusely sprinkled here where, now, The Numinous lives, on another beautifully warm and Sunny day, bright with light remembered...

June 2008

ooo

### **This Flow of Feelings**

The truth is that I am not able to contain, restrain, the sorrow, the sadness felt through this knowing of my multitudinous mistakes. Unable: and so I am become, am now, only a flowing of moments remembered with such a ferocity of engagement that I am there, reborn, again:

There... to smell, to feel, the sultry freshness of warm Spring morning when off I cycled to work some twelve miles distant and she, first wife, was left to cry in loneliness, alone: no ending to that argument the dark night before as I in selfish concentration enjoyed the greening grass of

vergeful country lanes, the birdful treeful songs, passing as they passed while the clouds above that brought the heavy warming rain depart. So glad then to be alone again among and cycling such peaceful Shropshire lanes...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have returned to clasp her in my arms and be the love she then so needed. To late this seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so blind.

The truth of there, again:

There... where the warmth of English Summer took to us seat ourselves in picnic beside the river Avon flowing as it flowed through rural counties. You - new wife, for our family living; while I - for ideations that I carried in the silly headpiece of my head, so that I with misplaced stupid passion could only talk of strife, somewhere. You, breathing hope as the very breeze breathed such warmth as kept us slim of clothes...

And only now - only now - knowing feeling how I should have embraced you there to return in sameness the gentle love so freely given for years until my selfish self so self-absorbed rightly broke your patience down. Far too late now my seeing far beyond such selfish self as kept me then so subsumed with ideations.

The truth I am reborn there, again:

There... where Fran stood beside her whiteful door as morning broke that late Spring day when I with firm resolve turned to take myself away: no doubt, no love, to still such hurt as walked me then. No empathy from sadful eyes to turn me back to try to try to try in love again. Instead - only such selfish hope as moved me far to meadow fields of farm where warm Sun kept me still, and smiling, while she remained bereft abandoned to lay herself down until her breath of life left her: no hand, no love, of mine to save her there where she died silent, slow, in loneliness alone...

Only now - only now - knowing feeling so intensely how I should have stayed: love before all excuses.

Thus, such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no presentiment of so many pasts: so much unforgivable, unliveable now - that I become my tears of failing to hope to sleep to dream to still this flow of feelings.

But there is no present - only moments with which to mesmerise myself, as when the Blackbird beyond this window sings and I am there, there again on meadow-fields of farm where work and living kept me safe, secluded, for five full years and more. Such peace, such hope, until death of Fran came to claim me for the failure that made me who and what I was and am.

For the truth is of failure; my failure of so many years and decades past. To fail to simply love to dream to hope as they my loves so loved in dreamful hope as kept them made them far better beings than I in insolent pride ever was or even now could ever hope or dream to be. No faith, no deity, no sacrament of absolution now to charm away, explain, redeem such a feckless selfish failure. Only more remorseful days - and darkful nights - alone that bear some winsome hope of words as this in weaksome recompense for wreakful storm I was upon those lives when I, dark tempest, tore their fragile human hopes asunder.

To die, here now, is easy: one example from far too many, with nothing here for needful Pride to gorge myself upon, again. Only such a flow of such demeaning memories as make my present no excuse for the stupid arrogance of such a prideful past. Only a hope for this example to void for one - some others - such ideation as kept and made me slave; one unreligious allegory for perchance not so many. Since

If you came this way,  
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,  
At any time or at any season,  
It would always be the same

I am no exception. So, perhaps, five thousand years remain before our species - whimpering after such bouleversements as still befits us now - fails, to fall, to perish, to be replaced: unless we change. But how?

The truth is, I have no answers. I only live other than I have lived, in empyrean hope of abatement of suffering, somewhere, somehow: and knowing a shared, loyal, love for the beautiful, the numinous, truth it is.

March 2011

## And What You Thought You Came For

And what you thought you came for  
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning  
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled If at all.  
Either you had no purpose  
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured  
And is altered in fulfilment.

TS Eliot: Little Gidding

There is now for me a quite simple, solitary, almost reclusive life, almost ended; as if the Cosmos - Wyrd - has contrived to place me exactly where I need to be: in, with, such a situation and surroundings as makes me remember the unwise deeds of those my pasts, and which placement offers more opportunities for one fallible human being to learn, especially about how people are not as, for many decades, I with my arrogance and abstractive purpose assumed.

For now I of the aged poor have no purpose, no ideation, to guide; no assumptions founded on, extrapolated from, some causal lifeless abstraction. No politics; no religion; not even any faith. There is instead only the living of moments, one fluxing as it fluxes to, within, the next. No dreams of Destiny; no supra-personal goals; no desires of self to break the calm of day and night. Only walks, and a being, alone to mingle with weather, Life, Nature as one so mingles when happiness is there inside unsupported by some outer cause or expectation of or from another.

Few possessions, belongings, as if I am a Gentleman of The Road again, but briefly staying here in this some un-heated house; or perhaps some almost-monk of one half-remembered pain apprehension, with neither monastery nor home, who feels now the hidden meaning of life: that this is all that there is or should be, this peace brought because there is a freedom from desiring desires. Someone sad, burdened by a deep naked knowledge of himself, but who and now, too sensitive perhaps, smiles too often and tries to hide the burgeoning tears of joy that sometimes seem to so betake him unawares...

I, now, someone - who unlike so many millions world-wide - fortunate indeed to have shelter, food adequate to feed his gauntness for a day; clothes sufficient to keep-in warmth; and health - though ageily ageing, slowly fading - enough to keep him fending for, and fendful of, himself. There could be more; there was far more, but that seems long ago; unneeded now. For this is all that there is, this happiness in moments when - needs fulfilled - no lust for change, having laid in wait within, bursts forth bringing thus such breaking difference as so often causes two, more, far more, humans to break or drift apart.

Emotions governed, basic needs supplied, with memories - of lives - sufficientized for years of daily dreams, what more remains, becomes required? Little, so very little, except we being human, external still, do still so cause such suffering, so much - for what?

For there has come upon me these past few years, of this so simple living, a certain understanding. Of how I am never, was never, ever, totally alone, being only one briefly born connexion. Of just how easy it is to be content, breeding happiness in oneself and others, and how even easier it is to lapse, to fail, to fall; to let feelings, abstractions, guide, control, as when in the past I would breed discontent within myself, with loved ones and others, never satisfied with this or that. For happiness, I presumed, lay in better things - a better home some better place; better food clothes holidays finer wine; that other woman, there; and, perhaps far worse, lay with better way of life for those unknown, a way wrought by deeds done, by pursuit of lifeless ideation as if I, that temporary self, might have made some difference and that those causal shells had or might be given meaning or even by violence, blood, become somehow gifted with the breath of life.

So little self-control. So much love, hopes, lives destroyed; and how much suffering I by hubris caused. So much - for what? Some selfish passing pleasure; no external change that lasted; that ever could, would, last. Since real change, discovered, is only and ever within ourselves, alone - there, interior, ready to gently touch another, one gift of one person personally known so that only now perhaps I am with, of, the numen living.

Thus I am returned to sometimes where I so briefly was, my purpose altered, far beyond the goals I in arrogance so vainly figured. For I am nothing special, unique; only some half-remembered vague aspirations of this age, whose words, life - as so many - perhaps uncovers divinity as the divine but whose

past concerned creating illusion, illusions, in expiation of a humanity then so lost.

Returned, as when I with tent, wandered, roamed. Returned, as those sunny warm days that Summer in Leeds when - before a monastery claimed me - I would walk barefoot inanely smiling so pleased to be free, young, alive.

Returned as when, bus-arrived, love caught me and she that April day embraced me with such hope, such gentle hope, such simple sharing dreams that remembrance now brings so many tears of sadness. For I in selfishness broke them.

Returned as that day - so many many years on - when love for me lived within another as we two so slowly walked some Worcester streets...

How foolish, how so very foolish, to have lost such times, such love, by lust for change, by such selfish stupidity as lived within me still and still until years years further on that other dying came in May to almost break betake me.

Now, I am only someone living - a simple living - with a certain fallible inner understanding, born of suffering, deaths, distress, despair. So there is so aptly now only slow quiescent walks alone and such memories, such memories, as I hope I hope have made a better man.

August 2011

ooo

### **This Only This**

In the garden, heard through the large open window, the birds having sensed the onset of Spring sing as they sing at this most glorious time of year. And I, I overwhelmed again by the sadness emanating even here from my knowing of the suffering-causing personal deeds of my past. So many, so many I had not thought to count so many - until now. So many how could I while buoyed by hubris have hurt that many? So much deception, so many lies, while they - the friends, family, wives, lovers - trusted with that goodness born of heavenly-human hope.

No prayers, no supplication, to wash away, remove, the manifold stains. If only, if only I (as once, those several times) believed, so that penance, absolution - embraced - might bring the chance to dream, to-be, to see, to love again. But no apologies possible nor by they desired, for they are gone - deceased, or lost those many years ago; no words sufficient, of meaning, to redeem a memory of such a scarring pain.

No mechanism, manufactured, to return before the time of such hurtful hurting with such knowing as so bends me now, down, down and kneeling sans any means of prayer. Only emotion falling, fallen, keeping such memories as some music makes numinously plaintive the joy the pain, century folding folded to century while they the multitudinous I's made the good the trusting suffer. No past of expiations. No Spring of goodness to burgeon forth to herald they through pathei-mathos changed.

Which is why, perhaps, so many still need desire - to trust in - God. For there is this only this: to write to rest to sleep to dream to cease to feel. And the world will still be there when I am gone.

March 2012

---

## **Part Three**

### **A Rejection of Extremism Perhaps Explained Some Personal Replies (2011-2012)**

#### **No Words Of Mine Can Describe The Remorse**

Yesterday was one of those glorious English Summer days of warm Sun, blue sky, when I - after a long walk - had sat down in the tufted grass on that slope of a hill to view the vista below. The river curving as it curved through the hedged-in fields of crops and pasture; the far distant greenful hills unclear in heat-made haze; the country lane that, now devoid of vehicles, would give access again to scattered houses and those well-separated working farms. It felt - perhaps was - paradise on Earth, for I fortunate to have water, food enough to feed me for a day; clothes and boots - though worn - sufficient for their purpose; even a place - dry, undamp, with bed - to sleep such sleep as might by night be gifted. It felt - and was -

good to be alive, touched a little and for a while by some type of inner peace. So little, so very little, really needed...

The problem in the past had been me, my lack of understanding of myself and my egoism. It was my fault: not the place, not the time, not the people, for I so desired with that arrogance of youth to exchange this paradise, here, for those ideas, the idealism, the abstractions, I carried around in my prideful hubriatic head. Seldom content, for long, since happiness came with - was - the pursuit, or the gratification of my personal desires. So destructive, so very destructive. So hurtful, inconsiderate, selfish, profane.

The defining moment, for me - in terms of understanding myself, in terms of understanding politics and the error of my decades of extremism - was the tragic personal loss of a loved one in May 2006. In the hours following that event I just knew - tearfully knew without words - my own pathetic failure; what I had lost, what was important. Thus there came upon me that day a sense of overwhelming grief, compounded by a remembrance of another personal loss of a loved one thirteen years earlier. For it was as if in those intervening years I had learned nothing; as if I had made the life and the dying and death of Sue, in 1993 - and of what we shared in the years before - unimportant.

I have no words to describe how insignificant, how worthless, I felt that day in May 2006; no words to describe, recall, retell, the remorse, the pain. Suffice now to recount that my life was never, could never be, the same again. Gone - the arrogance that had sustained me for so many experiential decades. Gone - the beliefs, the abstractions, the extremisms, I had so cherished and so believed in. That it took me another three years, from that day, to finally, irretrievably, break the bonds of my Shahadah sworn six years earlier - and the oath of personal loyalty that I believed still bound me to one person still alive then in a far distant land - most certainly says something more about me, about my character, about my interior struggles.

Thus it was that I came to know, to feel, how irrelevant politics and political organizations were for me, personally. So that ever since I have had no desire whatsoever to involve myself in politics - or even in trying to somehow change the world be it by politics, or by religion, or by whatever. Instead, my concern has been to try to [fully] understand and thence reform myself; to reflect upon my four decades of diverse involvements, discovering as I did those involvements for the extremisms they were; and to try to, and finally sans all abstractions, answer important questions such as Quid Est Veritas.

As I wrote in my May 2012 essay Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing:

"What I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certitude-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculous is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via pathei-mathos and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe, even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption."

Therefore I have no political views now; I do not and cannot support any political organization, as I do not adhere to nor believe in nor support any particular religion or even any conventional Way of Life. All I have are some personal and fallible answers to certain philosophical, personal, ethical, and theological,

questions. No certainty about anything except about my own uncertainty of knowing and about the mistakes, the errors, of my past.

Having written so much - far too much - for so many decades and having made so many suffering-causing mistakes, I also have no desire now to write anymore about anything, except perchance for a few missives such as this, as part perhaps of my needed expiation, and in explanatory reply when asked of certain things. Such as in exposition of my mistakes, my remorse, and particularly in explanation of the personal love, the gentleness, the compassion, the humility, the peace, that I feel - feel, not know - might possibly enable us to find, to feel, our paradise on Earth, and so not cause suffering, not add to the suffering that so blights this world and has so blighted it for so long, mostly because of people such as me. The ideologues, the extremists, the fanatics, the terrorists, the bigots, the egoists. The unhumble ones unappreciative of the numinous: those whose certainty of knowing - and those whose sense of a personal 'destiny' - makes them uncompassionate, unempathic, hateful, prejudiced, intolerant, and devoted to either 'their cause' or to themselves. Those whose happiness comes with - and is - the pursuit, and/or the gratification of their so selfish desires.

Just how many more seasons - years, decades, centuries, millennia - will we humans as a species need to find and to live our mortal lives in compassionate, empathic, paradisaal peace?

June 2012

ooo

### **Letter To My Undiscovered Self**

For nearly four decades I placed some ideation, some ideal, some abstraction, before personal love, foolishly - inhumanly - believing that some cause, some goal, some ideology, was the most important thing and therefore that, in the interests of achieving that cause, that goal, implementing that ideology, one's own personal life, one's feelings, and those of others, should and must come at least second if not further down in some lifeless manufactured schemata.

My pursuit of such things - often by violent means and by incitement to violence and to disaffection - led, of course, not only to me being the cause of suffering to other human beings I did not personally know but also to being the cause of suffering to people I did know; to family, to friends, and especially to those - wives, partners, lovers - who for some reason loved me.

In effect I was selfish, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist. Naturally, as extremists always do, I made excuses - to others, to myself - for my unfeeling, suffering-causing, intolerant, violent, behaviour and actions; always believing that 'I could make a difference' and always blaming some-thing else, or someone else, for the problems I alleged existed 'in the world' and which problems I claimed, I felt, I believed, needed to be sorted out.

Thus I as a neo-nazi, as a racist, would for some thirty years and by diatribes spoken, written, rant on and on about these alleged problems: about 'the Jewish/Zionist problem, about 'the dangers of race-mixing', about the need for 'a strong nation', about 'why we need a revolution', about 'the struggle for victory', about 'the survival of the Aryan race', and so on and so on. Later on, following my conversion to Islam, I would - for some seven or so years - write and talk about 'the arrogance of the kuffar', about 'the need for a Khilafah', about 'the dangers of kufr', about 'the need for Jihad against the kuffar', and so on and so on.

Yet the honest, the obvious, truth was that I - and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me - were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability - a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger - and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killinInstead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged, revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia.

In retrospect it was easy to be, to become, obsessed, a fanatic, an extremist - someone pursuing some goal, someone identifying with some cause, some ideology; someone who saw 'problems' and felt such 'problems' had to be sorted out. For such extremism, such goals, fulfilled a need; they gave a sense of identity; a sense of belonging; a sense of purpose. So that instead of being an individual human being primarily concerned with love, with and responsible for personal matters - the feeling and issues and problems of family, friends, loved ones - there was a feeling of being concerned with and part of 'higher more important things', with the inevitable result one becomes hard, hardened, and thence dehumanized.

Easy to be thus, to be an outward extremist; just as it is easy for some other humans (especially, it seems, for men) to be and remain extremists in an inner, interior, way: selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling, and thus obsessed with themselves, their physical prowess, and/or subsumed by their personal desires, their feelings, their needs, to the exclusion of others. For - despite our alleged, our believed in, 'idealism' - we the outward extremists were, we had become like, those selfish, hubristic, arrogant, unfeeling humans; only that instead of being slaves to our personal desires, feelings, needs, we were enslaved to our ideals, our goals, our ideologies, our abstractions, and to the phantasmagorical problems we manufactured, we imagined, or we believed in.

In essence, it was a failure of humanity on our, on my, part. A failure to see, to know, to feel, the human - the individual - reality of love, of peace. A failure to personally, as individuals, be empathic, compassionate, loving, kind, fair.

For love is not some ideal to be striven for, to be achieved by some supra-personal means. It is just being human: among, with, other humans, in the immediacy-of-the-moment. From such a human, individual, love - mutual and freely given, freely returned - there is peace: tranquillity, security.

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that,

I love delicate softness:  
For me, love has brought the brightness  
And the beauty of the Sun [1]

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings.

For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer.

February 2012

## Notes

[1]

ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καὶ μοι  
τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε.

Sappho, poetic fragment: P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) nr. 1787 fr. 1 et 2

ooo

## Four Replies: Just My Fallible Views, Again

The following extracts are from several personal e-mail replies, sent between June and September of 2012, to a lady correspondent originally from England but then living in an Eastern European country.

### Reply 1

*You seem very much preoccupied with lessons you have learned from grief and regret, pain and suffering [...]*



[My] recent propensity to be somewhat subsumed with a certain sadness [arose] from not only pondering on such questions as pathei-mathos, the causes/alleviation of suffering, and the nature of religion, expiation, and extremism, but also from understanding, from feeling, just how much suffering I personally have caused during my extremist decades and knowing that had it not been for the tragic death of a loved one some six years ago I would most probably have continued my career as a suffering-causing extremist.

Also, having spent decades trying to idealistically inspire people or manipulate them, and being manipulative either for allegedly idealistic reasons (some political or religious cause) or for purely selfish reasons, I finally came to know just how easy it is to make excuses for one's mistakes and unethical behaviour, especially in relation to some ideology or some political or religious cause. Having good intentions, I discovered, is not a valid reason to cause suffering, although believing one acted from good intentions does and can salve one's conscience. For I came to the conclusion that idealism itself was one of the fundamental causes of suffering, and that ultimately it is matter of us taking individual responsibility for ourselves and all our actions; for the suffering we cause, have caused, or can cause. To shift that responsibility onto others (as in some chain-of-command) – or onto some political cause or some faith – is just, in my fallible view at least, unethical.

As is positing or believing in some supreme deity who will decide matters for us (and judge us and others) and/or who has, apparently, laid down what is right and what is wrong.

There are somewhat complex and difficult questions here (or at least they seem complex and difficult questions to me). Questions such as if there is no God/supreme-deity – and no mechanism such as karma and thus no rebirth – then how to understand suffering and what do reformation of ourselves and expiation mean, and do they even have, or should they have, any meaning sans religion? How do we – sans religion and ideology – decide, know, what is ethical and what can motivate us to act ethically? What is innocence? Horrid things happen every day to people who do not deserve them. Every minute of every day somewhere some human being suffers because of some deed done to them by some other human being. Should that concern us? If so, why, and what could/might we do about it, and will what we do cause more suffering?

What I have termed 'the philosophy, the way, of pathei-mathos' – that is, my now much revised 'numinous way' – is just my attempt to answer such questions. And an attempt born from me accepting the truth about myself and my suffering-causing past. To do otherwise, I feel and felt, would have been to somehow in some way demean – to not learn from – that tragic recent death of a loved one. To, instead, continue with the arrogance, the hubris, of my past.

Perhaps it would have been easier for me to just accept the answers of some existing Way or of some religion. Certainly, a religious expiation could have eased the burden, relieved and relieve some or most of the grief, felt. A burden, a grief, which certainly has fuelled and infused my writings these past few years and some of which writings are my rather feeble attempts at a non-religious but hopefully still numinous expiation.

[...]

## Reply 2

Perhaps all we can do is try and communicate, in some way (but gently) that wordless (empathic) knowing of another human being to others. A wordless humanizing knowing that I have come to appreciate many men seem to so often lack or believe or feel is far less important than their macho posturing and their love of and seeming need for conflict, control, competition, and war. Perhaps if women were more assertive, empowered, accepting of themselves, and perhaps if men appreciated women more – and men (heaven forbid) developed within themselves certain muliebral qualities – there might be less suffering in the world.

[...]

In my personal experience at least there is and was a positive aspect to Catholicism, as there is (again in my view and my experience) a positive aspect to most if not all conventional religions from Islam to Judaism to Buddhism to Christianity.

This is, they have the propensity to remind us of the need for humility by setting certain limits regarding our behaviour, and by in some way and in their own manner making us aware of the numinous, the sacred. Which is why, over the decades, I have learned to respect them and their adherents while accepting that their answers, their way, are not my answers, my way.

In respect of the sacred, for instance, I still find that one of the most beautiful expressions of the numinous is Catholic chant: Gregorian, Cistercien, and Vieux-Roman. Indeed, one of my favourite pieces of music is now, as it has been for decades, *Répons de Matines pour la fête de Saint Bernard*. One of my treasured memories is, as a monk, singing the office of Compline and then, in the sublime silence of the church, going to the Lady Chapel to kneel in contemplative wordless prayer on the stone floor in front of a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Such peace, such purity, in those moments. Another treasured memory is, decades later and when a Muslim, travelling in the Western Desert and with my Egyptian guide stopping to face Makkah and pray Zuhur Namaz while the hot Sun beat down and a hot breeze blew sand to cover part of my prayer mat. Again, a purity of silence – no one else around for perhaps a hundred miles – and a wordless warm feeling of connexion with something pure and far beyond and balancing our human hubris: to place us into the necessary supra-personal perspective.

Perhaps on balance the positive, humanizing, virtues of such religions now outweigh their negative qualities? Certainly, it seems to me, that most of the worst excesses of – for example – Christianity are now and hopefully historical (and one thinks here of excesses such as the Inquisition).

*You just seem so sad... and it's such a pity to waste time being sad when there are a million and one reasons not to be.*

In a strange way a certain sadness seems to keep me focussed, balanced, and human, preventing – sans religion – the return of that arrogant, hubriatic, violent individual who incited and preached hatred, intolerance, violence, killing, and who was responsible for causing much suffering.

[...]

Thus consciously recalling my own pathei-mathos, and that of others, and feeling the sadness that is part of such a learning, is I feel somewhat necessary, at least for me and for now.

### **Reply 3**

As I type this I am listening to the orchestral version of Ravel's Pavane pour une Infante Defunte, and the beautiful music, your message, remind me yet again of our strange human condition; of our ability, our potential, to do what is fair, to be kind and to love, and also of our propensity to hate, to resort to violence, to be barbaric, as if the suffering of so many for so many millennia meant nothing, with nothing learned, except by a few.

A while ago, when I chanced to be travelling in England the train stopped at a station to allow new passengers to embark, I noticed a group of some four young men, in their early twenties. Yet even had not two of them been wearing (what I am informed are called) 'hoodies' embroidered with the name and symbol of their organization I would have recognized them. For forty years ago that would have been me, there, at such a place on such a day as that. A young man enthusiastically on his way to some political demonstration, or some meeting; proudly, defiantly, displaying his allegiance to his extremist cause, and standing, walking - holding himself - in such a way that you know he is ready for, even eager for, a fight.

This distant, momentary, and regardable encounter caused this ageing man - a when beyond three score - a certain sadness. What value, then - what purpose - my writings these past few years? For it was as if the pathei-mathos of that aged man, as that of so many others - our knowing of the human cost and consequences of hatred - had little or no effect. The same prejudice; the same propensity and need for violence; the same disruption of so many non-harming innocent lives; the same lack of empathy, understanding, love; the same intolerance and the same spewing forth and distribution of ignorant propaganda. Only the names, the people, the symbols and the flags, change; year following year, decade after decade.

I well knew the perceived enemies of these latter-day types: the people hated, reviled; the subject of the speeches, the propaganda, of their leaders.

I well knew how they hated, and why. I well knew the slyness of their leaders, of how they desired to describe, to positively portray, themselves - and the excuses made regarding violence. Above all, perhaps, I know so well the ignorance, the intolerance, the inhumanity, on which their beliefs, their cause, was founded, and which ignorance, which intolerance, which inhumanity, was indeed their cause, whatever the words, whatever the name, whatever the flag, whatever the year.

Not long after that impersonal encounter I did personally try to rationally engage with a few supporters of that organization, in an effort to correct - from personal experience - at least some of their prejudices about Islam and Muslims. To no avail, of course, so deep, irrational, was that prejudice, so strong the hatred of their perceived enemies; so alien to them was any vestige of humility. And would I, some forty

years ago, have listened to some old man pontificating about his experiences, his life, his learning? I doubt it. For I then, as they now, had that certainty-of-knowing, that arrogance, that is one of the foundations of extremism, of whatever kind.

Perhaps my political opponents of decades past were right and that the only effective way to deal with such people of intolerance, hatred, violence, and prejudice is to oppose them 'on the streets' and take every opportunity to reveal them for the bigots they are... But I no longer have any definitive answers, having only a certain certitude about my own unknowing.

#### **Reply 4**

[...]

To have such [youthful] certainty might make life easier and perhaps - in my case - as enjoyable as I remember those now long gone decades of youth and early manhood. I, as I am sure many others do and have done, have occasionally day-dreamed about returning to some such time in the past with the understanding and the knowledge gained in the intervening years and so perhaps act differently and (at least in my case) thus avoid causing the suffering so caused then.

But I do believe that my lack of certainty now is - even at the cost of a certain sadness - a good thing for me, as it prevents that arrogance of my youthful self from returning and seems to somehow better enable me to appreciate, to feel, the numinous and thus the distinction between what is good and what is bad.

Hence I find myself in the curious position of now possibly understanding and appreciating the wordless *raison d'etat* of Catholic monasticism, manifest as this is in a personal humility; a humility that during my time as a monk my then still hubriatic self could not endure for long. Which recent understanding and appreciation led me for a short while at least, and only a few years ago, to wistfully if unrealistically yearn to return to that particular secluded way of life. And unrealistic because for all that understanding, appreciation, and yearning, I no longer had the type of faith that was required, the type of Christian faith I did have when I had lived that monastic way of life. A lack of faith I really discovered and felt when I went, during that not-too-long-ago period of yearning, to stay once again and for a while in a monastery...

*You really do seem to have been born with an overwhelming urge to fix the world, don't you? Is that why you're so sad? Because you can't fix it?*

Unfortunately, I do seem to have been cursed, for some forty years, with idealism and with a hubriatic, fanatical, belief in what I deludedly believed was 'a good cause'. Which idealism and which belief caused me, as an extremist, to inflict and contribute to suffering; to incite violence, hatred, prejudice, intolerance.

But my sadness now is because of that extremist past; because of my arrogance; because I did cause such suffering; because I for so long incited violence, hatred, prejudice, intolerance. Because I did what was wrong, and cannot undo the harm done.

This sadness - this knowing of my own mistakes, this knowing of my own arrogance, this knowing of the harm I have done - means that I have no desire whatsoever to try and 'fix the world'. Rather, it means a deep personal remorse, a desire - however silly it might seem to others - for expiation. It means I do not like myself - as a person - knowing what I did, what I was capable of, and maybe still am capable of. It means I have to remember - every day - my mistakes, my uncertainty of knowing, and what is good, numinous, beautiful, innocent. It means living a quiet and quite reclusive life.

Which sadness and which remembering were part of the genesis of my philosophy of *pathei-mathos*. Of my feeling that perhaps we - as compassionate individuals aware of our fallibility and past mistakes - should not concern ourselves with what is beyond the purview of our empathy. Which in practice means the living of a private, a very personal, life where we do not concern ourselves with things we admit we do not really understand and have no personal knowledge of; that we do not meddle in the affairs of people we do not know and do not interact with on a personal basis; and that we only ever get involved in valourous defence of someone unfairly treated or unfairly attacked if we personally encounter such a situation or such an event.

ooo

#### **One Error-Prone Self**

The reason why I now do not - and have no desire to - "get involved with social change" (or to "go out into the world and try to give something back" as another correspondent recently expressed it) is the reality of

me having made, and knowing and feeling I made, so many mistakes, shown such poor judgement, been so arrogant, so selfish, for so many decades - for most of my adult life. Given this reality, I simply do not trust myself anymore not to cause suffering, not to make even more mistakes, not to show poor judgement again. Just as I know my responsibility, my blame, for those my past mistakes and their human consequences.

Thus, why would I want to inflict myself on the world anymore? External engagement might in theory (just might) be possible for me again were I to have the guidance, the oversight, of others; a moral authoritative framework provided by good people I could empathize with and trust to guide, advise, correct me. But even then, even then given my past propensity to be hubriatic and selfish, I might veer away from doing what was right.

For the simple honest truth is that I now feel, in my very being, that I have no right to, can find no justification for me to - beyond that necessitated by personal honour in the immediacy of the moment [1] - interfere in the lives of others, in however small a way even if my initial motives might be (or seemed to me to be) good. For who I am to judge, decide, things beyond the purview of empathy and a very personal honour? I am just one fallible exceedingly error-prone human being with a long proven history of impersonal interference, of hubriatic, suffering-causing, and selfish, deeds. Someone who does not trust himself anymore and who values and tries to cultivate wu-wei. Which is the major reason why some months ago I ceased to write (to pontificate) - about anything; leaving me with only some few and sporadic (and soon also to cease) personal correspondences such as this [2].

In effect, I feel I am not - by being reclusive - retreating from the world, just seeking not to inflict my error-prone self on the world, on others. An error-prone self, a person, I admit I now do not like very much. Which is why there is also no longer any desire, not even any secret desire, to share my life, in however small or complete a way, with anyone or even with others be they friends old or new. Of course I could be wrong, and am just being silly or stupid. But it is how I have come to feel.

All I now have therefore are the brief human contacts that this type of reclusive non-religious life allows or finds is fitting. The smile, the cheery return of a 'hello' or a 'good morning' when a person is passed while out walking. Or perchance talk of the weather. No reason for me to be gruff, aloof or rude. Quite the contrary - a need to smile; to be polite; perhaps even a little charming and briefly. As if such small so human things so briefly made might be some minuscule emanation of that wordless quiet quite inexplicable inner joy and peace which somehow in some strange manner seems to flow within when I am out, outdoors, wherever whenever, able thus to feel the freshness of the air, see clouds and sky, feel this living planet as Nature lives and changes, and be again one particular if fragile brief mortal emanation, one microcosmic none-harming connexion, to all Life. For there, alive, it is as if I am who and what I now should be: no thought, no words, to spoil or soil earth, wind, sky, sea, clouds, heavens, or water.

But yes, there is a certain inner emptiness, and often, and bearing grief and sadness, when alone indoors. Inner vacant sometimes colding spaces which perhaps a belief in God - or the gods - might fill, and which certainly a partner or prayer or both would warm and dissipate. Yet this certain inner emptiness, such sadness, I sense is perhaps is as it should be for me, as part expiation for the varied harm my varied pasts - in this one life - have caused.

So many, so very many many, others in so many places world-wide far less fortunate than I, so that I have to - must - accept my pottering hopefully now non-harmful way of life, remembering. Always remembering that *θάνατος δὲ τότε ἔσσεται, ὁππότε κεν δὴ Μοῖραι ἐπικλώσωσ'* [3] and the suffering I personally have caused, balanced (perhaps) as such remembering is by a (perhaps naive) hope that someone or some many may learn and change as I seemed to have learnt and changed: learned to see, to feel, to try to gently be, the goodness we humans are capable of and have often shown ourselves to be capable of. A goodness revealed by empathy, and thus presenting to us an understanding of innocence, peace, forgiveness, honour, love and joy, far beyond any words I know.

The grievous reprehensible sadness-causing mistake I as extremist, with my fanatical hubriatic certitude of knowing, made for some forty years - and which all extremists of whatever kind always make - was/is to place some idea, some ideal, some dogma, some abstraction, before the innocence of human beings and before those quite simple things which empathy and *pathei-mathos* reveal and which express our humanity:

"...the desire for personal love and the need to be loyally loved; the need for a family and the bonds of love within a family that lead to the desire to protect, care for, work for, and if necessary defend one's loved ones. The desire for a certain security and stability and peace, manifest in a home, in sufficiency of food, in playfulness, in friends, in tolerance, in a lack of danger. The need for the dignity, the self-respect, that work, that giving love and being loved,

provide..." [4]

and a knowing of, a feeling for, and acknowledgement of, innocence: where those who are personally unknown to us are unjudged by us and are given the benefit of the doubt, since this presumption of innocence of others – until or unless direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, proves otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

That reprehensible mistake I made is why extremists embody and manifest hate and violence and conflict; because extremists dehumanize, as well as so often enjoying and needing the exhilaration, the sense of identity, the 'enemies', that hate and violence and conflict and abstractions give birth to and always thereafter nurture. A dehumanization so evident in the truth that extremists place some goal, some idea, some ideal, some dogma, some abstraction, some political/social/religious agenda, before a personal love, before a personal loyalty, before stability, peace, and innocence; blind as extremists mostly are - willfully or neglectfully, or naturally because of their character - to the good and to the good people of human intentions which and who exist and which and who have existed in those societies such extremists almost invariably, because of their hubriatic certitude-of-knowing, seek to undermine, destabilize, decimate, overturn, revolutionize, or destroy.

But I have no chanted, sung, or contemplative Opus Dei to try, in monastic peace and with hope and faith, to balance - Soli Deo Honor et Gloria - the unwise deeds of so many; nor any longer a desire or need to interfere in the lives of others. So there is for me only the living of each moment as it passes: no aim, no goal. Instead:

The smile of joy when Sun of Summer  
Presents again this Paradise of Earth  
For I am only tears, falling

November 2012

#### Notes

[1] As I mentioned in *The Numinous Balance of Honour* section of my *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary*,

"[The] personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἁρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη."

[2] The minor reason why I some months ago ceased to write is that my *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* contains (in my fallible view) all that is required for an understanding of, and all that is relevant to, my now completed *weltanschauung*.

[3] 'Our ending arrives whenever wherever the Moirai decide'. Attributed to Καλλίνου, as recorded by Ἰωάννης Στοβαῖος in his *Ἀνθολόγιον* (c. 5th century CE).

In respect of Μοῖραι (τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες) - Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies - qv. Aeschylus [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6, and Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 130:

Μοῖρ' ἀλαπάξει πρὸς τὸ βίαιον  
...by the purging Moirai subdued

[4] *Some Personal Musings On Empathy* [Part II of *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*]

ooo

#### A Slowful Learning, Perhaps

"And what the dead had no speech for, when living,  
They can tell you, being dead: the communication  
Of the dead is tongued with fire beyond the language of the living." [1]

Perhaps it is incumbent upon us to now celebrate, remember, transcribe, only the kind, the gentle, the

loving, the compassionate, the happy, and the personal, things - and those who have done them - and not the many things that have caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. For, so often it seems, we human beings have and have had for millennia a somewhat barbaric propensity to celebrate, to remember, to transcribe, our seeming triumphs of personal pride and of victory over others - be such others some declared enemy or some designated foe - always or almost always forgetting the suffering, the deaths, the destruction, that such a seeming, and always transient, victory over others has always involved, and always or almost always forgetting the suffering, the hurt, the unhappiness, that our selfish prideful desire to triumph, to succeed, causes in someone or some many somewhere.

For millennia so many have been fixated on either our selves - our pride, our success, our needs, our desires - or on the pride, the success, the needs, the security, the prosperity, we have assigned to or we accepted as a necessary part of some ideal, some entity, some supra-personal abstraction.

Thus, anciently, in the name of some Pharaoh or some Caesar, or some King, or some Chief, or some leader, or some religious faith, or on behalf of some interpretation of some religious faith, we sallied forth to war or to battle, causing suffering, death, destruction, and doing violence, to others. Invading here; invading there. Attacking here; interfering there. Defending this, or defending that. Destroying this, or destroying that.

Thus, latterly, in the name of some country, or some nation, or some political ideal, or some cause, or on behalf of some-thing supra-personal we believed in, we sallied for to war or did deeds that caused suffering, death, destruction, and inflicted violence on others. Defending this, or attacking that. Invading here; or colonizing there. Dreaming of or determined to find glory. Always, always, using the excuse that our cause, our ideal, our country, our nation, our security, our prosperity, our 'way of life', our 'destiny', hallowed our deeds; believing that such suffering, death, destruction as we caused, and the violence we inflicted on others, were somehow justified because 'we' were right and 'they' our foes, were wrong or in some way not as 'civilized' or as 'just' as us since 'their cause' or their 'way of life' or way of doing things was, according to us, reprehensible.

Whose voice now tells the story of all or even most of those who suffered and those who died in conflicts four thousand years ago? Three thousand, two thousand, years ago?

It is as if we, as a sentient species, have learnt nothing from the past four thousand years. Nothing from the accumulated pathei-mathos of those who did such deeds or who experienced such deeds or who suffered because of such deeds. Learnt nothing from four thousand years of the human culture that such pathei-mathos created and which to us is manifest - remembered, celebrated, transcribed - in Art, literature, memoirs, music, poetry, myths, legends, and often in the ethos of a numinous ancestral awareness or in those sometimes mystical allegories that formed the basis for a spiritual way of life.

All we have done is to either (i) change the names of that which or those whom we are loyal to and for which or for whom we fight, kill, and are prepared to die for, or (ii) given names to such new causes as we have invented in order to give us some identity or some excuse to fight, endure, triumph, preen, or die for. Pharaoh, Caesar, Pope, Defender of the Faith, President, General, Prime Minister; Rome, Motherland, Fatherland, The British Empire, Our Great Nation, North, South, our democratic way of life. It makes little difference; the same loyalty; the same swaggering; the same hubris; the same desire, or the same obligation or coercion, to participate and fight.

How many human beings, for instance, have been killed in the last hundred years in wars and conflicts? Wars and conflicts hallowed, or justified, by someone or some many somewhere. One hundred million dead? More? How many more hundreds of millions have suffered because of such modern wars and conflicts?

It is almost as if we - somehow flawed - need something beyond our personal lives to vivify us; to excite us; to test ourselves; to identify with. As if we cannot escape the barbarian who lies in wait, within; ready to subsume us once again so that we sally forth on behalf of some cause, some leader, or some ideal, or some abstraction, or as part of some crusade. As if we human beings, as Sophocles intimated over two thousand years ago, are indeed, by nature, and have remained sometimes honourable and sometimes dishonourable beings [2], able to sometimes be rational, thinking, beings, but also unable to escape our desire, our need, our propensity, to not only be barbaric but to try to justify to ourselves and to others our need for, and even our enjoyment of, such barbarity.

Or perhaps the stark truth is that it is we men who are flawed or incomplete and who thus need to change. As if we, we men, have not yet evolved enough to be able to temper, to balance, our harsh masculous nature with the muliebral; a balance which would see us become almost a new species; one which has, having finally sloughed off the suffering-causing hubriatic patriarchal attitudes of the past,

learnt from the pathei-mathos of our ancestors, from the pathei-mathos of our human culture, born and grown and nurtured as our human culture was, has been, and is by over four thousand years of human-caused suffering. A learning from and of the muliebral, for the wyrdful thread which runs through, which binds, our human pathei-mathos is a muliebral one: the thread of kindness, of gentleness, of love, of compassion; of empathy; of the personal over and above the supra-personal.

A learning that reveals to us a quite simple truth; that what is wrong is causing or contributing to suffering, and that, with (at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) one exception and one exception only [3] we cannot now (again, at least in my admittedly fallible opinion) morally justify intentionally causing or contributing to the suffering of any living being.

How many more centuries - or millennia - will we need? To learn, to change, to cease to cause such suffering as we have for so many millennia caused.

My own life - of four decades of suffering-causing extremism and personal selfishness - is, most certainly, just one more example of our manful capacity to be stupid and hubriatic. To fail to learn from the pathei-mathos of human culture, even though I personally had the advantages of a living in diverse cultures and of a 'classical education', and thus was taught or became familiar with the insights of Lao Tzu, of Siddhartha Gautama, of Jesus of Nazareth, of Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus, Cicero, Livy, Marcus Aurelius, Dante Alighieri, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, TS Eliot, EM Forster, and so many others; and even though I had the opportunity to discover, to participate in, and thus felt, the numinosity, the learning, inherent in so many other things, from plainchant to Byrd, Dowland, Palestrina, Tallis, to JS Bach and beyond. And yet, despite all these advantages, all these chances to learn, to evolve, I remained hubriatic; selfish, arrogant, in thrall to ideations, and like so many men somewhat addicted to the joy, to the pleasures, of kampf, placing pursuit of that pleasure, or some cause, or some ideation, or my own needs, before loved ones, family, friends. Only learning, only finally and personally learning, after a death too far.

Is that then to be our human tragedy? That most of us cannot or will not learn - that we cannot change - until we, personally, have suffered enough or have encountered, or experienced, or caused, one death too many?

November 2012

## Notes

[1] TS Eliot, Little Gidding

[2] As Sophocles expressed it:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει...  
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being...  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts - he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

[3] The one exception is personal honour; the valourous use of force in a personal situation, as mentioned in The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendiary.

ooo

## Miserere Mei, Deus

In respect of religion, there seems to have grown within me, this past year, a feeling regarding prayer, especially contemplative prayer, or rather that quiet way of being when - with no expectation of or belief in God - no words are desired or required and one is aware of the numinous in such an unaffected way that there is a calmness emanating not from within - not caused by our knowing or feeling of self - but from that ineffable vastness beyond which includes us and all the life that seeps into us, there in our stillness: emanations, of not only the dreams, the hopes, the love, the sadness, the sorrow, the grief, the pain, the joy, the tragedy, felt, known, experienced by we humans millennia after millennia, but also of



the being, the essence, of the other life around us, here as Nature, and elsewhere, which, as we, 'hath but a short time to live'.

A feeling, an intimation, of perhaps in some small way now understanding the Latin Opus Dei - Officium Divinum - as a needful daily reminder of our needful humility, as the plaintive cry Miserere Mei, Deus so reminds, and as the Namaz of Islam also so reminds with its Ruku, Sajdah, and recitation of Subhana Rabbiyal a'la. A needful daily reminder that we are transient beings, prone to dishonour, selfishness, and hubris, but who can be loving and kind, and beings prone to the charisma, the temptation, of words, either our own or those spoken or written by others. A reminder that we can so easily forget, have so often forgotten, "that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος." [1]

A feeling, thus, of again understanding the necessitude we humans seem to have for prayer and for God, for Allah, for the gods, for the divine; and why this need, and its varied expression over millennia, should be respected and not profaned by that hubriatic personal certitude-of-knowing which enthral, and has enthralled, so many especially in more recent times, making many of them prejudiced against organized religions and often against other expressions of spirituality.

Personally, I have - fully knowing my past hubris, the suffering I have caused, and aware of my manifold errors and mistakes over four decades - a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware as I am how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond. So much so that such sacred music is now the only music I can listen to, out of choice, redolent as it is, has become, for me, of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred suprapersonal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos...

Without such religious, such spiritual, such organized, reminders, daily or weekly - that is, without prayer and without what is perhaps the best that religions and spirituality manifest - how do we balance another need of ours? That need to cause suffering and cry havoc, and a need whose genesis, perhaps, resides in our desire to be, to express, to re-affirm the separation-of-otherness, manifest as this is and has been in our own self-importance, our egoism, our greed; and in our belief that 'we', our assumed or our assigned category, are better than, superior to, 'them', the others: that 'we' are 'right' or have right on our side while 'they' do not and are wrong, leading as such belief so often does and so often has done to conflict and war and to us treating 'the others' in a dishonourable, uncompassionate, way because we, or those we follow and obey, have dehumanized 'them'. For I now incline toward the view that without such categorization, such assumptions - such a prejudice, such a belief - about 'us' and 'them', without such greed, such self-interest, and such a need to express, to manifest, importance, then war and suffering-causing armed conflict are not possible.

Is humility, therefore and as most religions and spiritual ways inform us, a necessity for us, as human beings? And if so, then how to manifest such humility, to be reminded of such a need, if we, as I now, personally have no expectation of or belief in God, or in Allah - in Heaven or Jannah - or in gods, or even in mechanisms such as rebirth and karma? Such questions have greatly occupied me for the past three years.

Given what I have intuited about our human nature - what many others have intuited or discovered over millennia - and what I believe I may have learned from my own pathei-mathos, I feel humility is indeed a necessity for us, as a means of guiding us toward avoiding causing suffering; as a means of placing our own life in the cosmic perspective of Life. That is, as a means of appreciating our nature as fallible, error-prone, beings who have the ability, the character, to not only refrain from committing the error of hubris but to also rationally understand why hubris is an error and what the numinous may be, beyond ideations and beyond the myths, the allegories, the spiritualities, the words, that we have used and do use in order to try and express it.

As to how to manifest humility - sans religions, sans prayer to a deity or deities, (etcetera) - I admit I do not know, although my Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos is my attempt to find, and to try and express, some answers [2]. Fallible answers such as the importance, the numinosity, of personal love; fallible answers such as empathy, and the knowing, the understanding, of others (and of ourselves) that empathy provides and of how such empathy and such empathic knowing is and can only be personal.

Fallible answers such as an appreciation of - and the presumption of - innocence, understood as



innocence is as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us - of whom we have have no empathic knowledge - are therefore unjudged by us and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt until direct personal experience and individual and empathic knowing of them prove otherwise; and fallible answers such as appreciating how the separation-of-otherness leads to, is the genesis of, hubris.

Which leads me, and has led me, to other related questions. Without religions or some form or forms of social spirituality - without a belief in Heaven or Jannah or in a promised afterlife, or in rebirth and karma - how can humans change and so avoid the rotten behaviour, the hubris, that causes or contributes to suffering, and should we, as individuals or collectively, even try to change others, or should we concern ourselves only with our own inner and outer reformation? Has The State [3] assumed such a moral rôle by means of laws, punishments, and other mechanisms of authority or persuasion, and should The State assume or be allowed to assume such a moral rôle? My own answers, fallible and such as they are [4], are that our change, our reformation, are personal; consequences of pathei-mathos, a balanced judgement, and of empathy, and thus involve an appreciation of the numinous; and that the only non-suffering, non-hubriatic, way to change or try to change, to reform, others is by personal, direct, example and by valourous deeds in the immediacy of the moment. These answers are thus spiritual, apolitical, and imply that

"...what matters [is] our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ." [5]

December 2nd, 2012

Notes, Post Scriptum:

[1] *Toward Humility - A Brief Personal View*, included in *Pathei-Mathos: A Path to Humility* (2012)

[2] In addition to that recueil, the text *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* provides a reasonable overview of such answers.

[3] As mentioned in *Politics, Society, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*, The State is defined as:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and large geographical area - land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/clique/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

[4] Outlined in *Recuyle Of The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* and *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*.

[5] The quotation is from my *Prejudice, Extremism, Islamophobia, and Culture*.

---

## Appendix

### Usage of Terms

#### Abstraction

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average)

value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

## **Descriptor**

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

## **Extremist/Extremism**

By extreme I mean to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (1) the result of such harshness, and (2) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris.

## **Fanatic**

Someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for and/or commitment to some cause or ideal or ideology is excessive, intemperate.

## **Ideation**

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence'

or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

## **Ideology**

By the term ideology is meant a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

## **Incitement**

Incitement is used in the sense of 'to instigate' or to provoke or to cause or to 'urge others to'.

## **Indefinity**

*var.* indifinity. Unmeasurable; immeasurable; endlessness; of no known limit. [Derived from indefinite c.1600 ce]

## **Innocence**

In general, innocence is regarded as the attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence – until personal experience and individual knowing of them prove otherwise – is the fair, the moral thing, to do.

In specific instances, such as quite young children, innocence implies actions are blameless, without harmful intent, and thus should be understood as causing no harm.

## **Masculous**

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence

/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schibboleth." *True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

## **Muliebral**

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word *muliebris*, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

## **Politics**

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

## **Radical Islam**

By radical Islam is meant a particular modern harsh interpretation of Deen al-Islam. This is the belief that practical Jihad against 'the enemies of Islam' and the occupiers of Muslim lands is an individual duty incumbent upon every able-bodied Muslim; that Muslims should live among Muslims under the guidance of Shariah; that Muslims should return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah and distance

themselves from the ways and the influence of the kuffar.

Many though not all radical Muslims also support the restoration of the Khilafah; are intolerant of those Muslims they consider have allied themselves with the kuffar; and believe that 'martyrdom operations' against enemies are permissible according to Quran, Sunnah, and Ijmah. In addition, many supporters of such operations also believe that the deaths of non-combatants in some or all such operations are permissible according to the aforementioned criteria.

### **Separation-of-Otherness**

The separation-of-otherness is a term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict, hatred, violence, and suffering.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

### **Society**

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence.

### **State**

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling – over a particular and large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliue/minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

### **Terrorism**

A useful definition of terrorism is that it is the calculated use of violence or the threat of violence to inculcate fear; intended to coerce or to intimidate governments or societies in the pursuit of an ideology or of goals that are generally considered to be political, religious, or ideological.

### **The Good**

The good is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced.

### **Violence**

By the term violence is meant the use - by a person or persons and in pursuit of an ideology or of goals that are generally considered to be political, religious, or ideological - of physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons.

---

cc David Myatt 2013

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license  
and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

## Extremism, Terrorism, Culture, And Physis A Question Of Being

Disinclined as I am, and as I have been for many years, to comment on recent events, I have - after much reflexion - decided to respond to certain questions asked of me, given that several friends and diverse individuals (communicating through correspondence forwarded to me through intermediaries) have expressed an interest in my opinion about some recent events in France because of my forty years of (now regretted) practical experience of extremism [1] and extremists and which experience included not only being an advocate, as a Muslim, of what has become known as 'Islamic extremism', but also of being a neo-nazi activist and ideologue who preached and who advocated subversion, insurrection, hatred, and terrorism.

The recent events in France, where seventeen people were killed at four locations between the 7th and 9th of January 2015 - and similar events on other lands, from September 2001 (9/11) onwards - have led many people to speculate about the problem of, about causes of, and what may be required to prevent, such acts.

My admittedly fallible view, derived from my personal decades of experience, is that simple cause-and-effect answers are rather misguided, however naturally instinctive and/or politically expedient they might be - and/or however effective (or perhaps necessary) some of them might be in the short-term: of years, of a decade or more. For I incline toward the view that the long-term solution does not lie in more legislation, or in more security measures, or in idealizing one culture over and above another (as in the West verses Islam), or in invading other lands, or even in attempting to combat 'extremism' by means of advocacy of a 'moderate' interpretation of some religion or some political ideology. Rather, the long-term solution lies in understanding our basal physis [2] as human beings and then considering how - or even if - that basal physis can be changed, evolved.

For the reality - the truth - of our being is that we humans can always find, and have always found - century after century, millennia after millennia - some cause or some ideology or some ideation or some interpretation of some religion or some dogma or some leader to allow us to express, to live, what is solely masculine [3]. For as I know from my own experience and involvements such an expression, such a living, vivifies, excites, and has so often provided us (or a significant portion of us) with a sense of purpose, an identity, and thus given our lives meaning.

Thus, for that significant portion of us, it is our basal nature - our basal character - as human beings which is at fault, the cause; not some current or past harsh interpretation of some religion or of some weltanschauung; not some 'extremist' ideology, per se; not some failure to tackle extremism; not some deficiency of law nor some failure (of intelligence, or otherwise) by the Police or by some State security service. That is, the harsh modern interpretation of a religion such as Islam (manifest for example in al-Qa'ida and in groups such as ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah fil 'Iraq wa ash-Sham), or the extremism manifest in nazism and fascism (past and present) are symptoms, not the cause.

For it is my considered opinion - fallible as it is and based as it is on what (admittedly limited) knowledge I have of the circumstances - that the perpetrators of recent events in France simply found, in a harsh interpretation of Islam, something which not only gave them a sense of purpose, a goal - which gave their lives meaning - but also provided them with an excuse to behave according to their physis or what they believed their physis should be: to be what they were or had become or should become. That is, lacking that empathy - such compassion and such honour, such muliebral virtues - as would have engendered within them a feeling for, an intuition of, and thus an appreciation of, innocency [4] and of individuals as individuals and not as abstracted 'enemies' or as somehow 'inferior' to them or as a means whereby what they believed in, or desired (such as some after-life), could be achieved.

In other words, a harsh modern interpretation of a particular religion hallowed what is masculine to the detriment of what is muliebral, making such a basal, such an unbalanced, masculine physis an ideal to be imitated and strived for, and which masculine ideal included the notion of a personal immolation, via kampf and a dishonourable disregard for the innocency of others, as a means to some posited goal. An unbalanced masculine physis also evident in - and idealized by - the ideologies of communism, nazism, and fascism, and in and by the 'puritanical' and inquisitorial interpretations of Christianity centuries before.

How then can that basal physis be changed or evolved? How can the masculine be balanced with the muliebral thus avoiding such unbalance, such bias toward the masculine, as has brought so much suffering recent and otherwise? All I have is a rather philosophical, quite long-term, and quite personal answer. Of, in terms of individuals, the development by individuals of empathy and the cultivation of the virtue of personal honour; and, in terms of society, Studia Humanitatis: that is, education to form, to shape, the manners and the character, of individuals by not only acquainting them with such topics as are, and were traditionally, included in that subject, but also of them being educated in such knowledge concerning our physis as our thousands of years old human culture of pathos-mathos has bequeathed to us [5].

David Myatt  
January 2015

### Notes

[1] As I have explained in many of my post 2009 writings, by *extreme* is meant *to be harsh*, so that I consider an

*extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, *harsh* is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic, uncompassionate.

Hence I consider *extremism* to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

[2] I use the term *physis* (φύσις) as a revealing, a manifestation, of not only the true nature of beings but also of the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being. *Physis* is often apprehended (and thus understood) by we humans as the nature, the character, of some-thing; as, for example, in our apprehension of the character of a person.

[3] By the term *masculous* is meant certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love, compassion, and culture. In my view, extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, *masculous* nature.

*Masculous* is from the Latin *masculus* and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the *masculous* Schibboleth." *True Happiness, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

[4] I use the term 'innocence' to refer to a presumed attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged by us and who thus, as honour requires, are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of the innocency of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the honourable, the cultured, the virtuous, thing to do.

[5] Refer to my May 2014 essay [Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos](#), and my more recent [Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis](#).

---



## Extremism And Reformation

David Myatt

70

### ΕΡΜΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΤΡΙΣΜΕΓ.

πρὸς τὸν υἱὸν Τατ ἐν ὁρῇ λόγος ἀπόκρυφος  
πρὸς παλιγενεσίας, καὶ σιγῆς ἐπαγγελίας.



Ν Τεῖς ἡνικοῖς ὦ πάτερ, ἀνιγμα-  
τωδῶς, καὶ οὐ τηλαυγῶς ἐφρασας  
πρὸς θεότηλος ἀγαλεζήμιος· καὶ ὅκ  
ἀπεκάλυψας, φάμιος μηδένα  
διυῖαοθαι φημιῶν πρὸ τῆς πα-  
λιγενεσίας, ἐμοὶ τέ σου ἰκέτου ἡμομίου ὅτι τῆς τῆ  
ὁρις μεταβάσεως, μὲν δὲ σὲ ἐμοὶ ἀγαλεζήμιος, καὶ πυ-  
ρομίου τὸν τῆς παλιγενεσίας λόγον μαθεῖν, ὅτι τῆς  
πρὸς πᾶντα, μόνον ἀγνοῶ· καὶ ἔφης ὅτι μὲν μέλλης κόσμος  
ἀπαλλοτριεῖσθαι, πρὸς διδόναι μοι ἔτιμος ἐγνόμιον,  
καὶ ἀπηλλοβίσσα δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ φρόνημα, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς τῆς κό-  
σμου ἀπάτης· σὺ δέ μοι καὶ ταῦτα ὑπερήματα ἀναπλήρω-  
σον, οἷς ἔφης μοι παλιγενεσία πρὸς διδόναι πρὸς ἡ-  
μενος, ὅκ φωνῆς ἢ κρυβίω· ἀγνοῶ ὦ τεισιμένε εἴ

## **Contents**

- ° Preface
  - ° A Premature Grieving
  - ° A Perplexing Failure To Understand
  - ° Concerning The Abstractions of Extremism and Race
  - ° Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate
    - Part One: According to the Philosophy of The Numinous Way
    - Part Two: A Personal Perspective - My Uncertitude of Knowing
  - ° Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism
  - ° Suffering And The Human Culture Of Pathei-Mathos
  - ° Persecution And War
  - ° The Matter With Death
  - ° Appendix I: Physis And Being
  - ° Appendix II: Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing
  - ° Appendix III: A Matter Of Honour
-



## Preface

The genesis of this compilation of essays was, as mentioned in the included essay *A Premature Grieving*, the publication in 2019, by a political advocacy group, of various unsubstantiated allegations and disinformation about me and the subsequent repetition of such allegations and disinformation by some mainstream newspapers and media outlets.

The unsubstantiated allegations and the disinformation concerned my supposed continuing involvement with extremism, specifically neo-nazism; it being apparent that neither the political advocacy group nor the newspapers and media which repeated the allegations and the disinformation had bothered to read my extensive post-2011 writings about rejecting extremism and about seeking expiation for my decades-long extremist past [1].

This compilation of essays is my reply to those unsubstantiated allegations and disinformation.

While two of the essays included in this compilation - both written in 2012 and respectively titled *Concerning Some Abstractions* and *Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate* - have been superseded by my 2013 book *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism* [2] and by subsequent writings concerning the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' they nevertheless in my fallible view may have some relevance for those interested both in my rejection of extremism and how and why I developed my 'numinous way' into my post-2012 'philosophy of pathei-mathos'. [3]

For the writing of those two essays - with their assuredness, their many suppositions, their many generalizations and some rhetoric - helped me organize and then refine my thoughts about extremism in general and my own extremist past in particular. It also made me moderate both my thoughts and how I came to express those thoughts in writing; a moderation expressed by my *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*.

In a similar way, my 2012 essay *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*, [4] also included in this compilation, helped me organize and then express in writing my thoughts about National Socialism and Hitler.

It should be noted that many of the texts referenced in the older essays included in this compilation - many referencing my now dated 'numinous way' - are available only in archived versions of my website and weblog, [5] having been replaced, post-2012, by my writings concerning the philosophy of pathei-mathos, about which philosophy I have included as an appendix here my recent text *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*.

I have reproduced the essays as they were originally published even though

there is some repetition of content and/or of quotations between some of the included essays.

The illustration is the beginning of the Greek text of tractate XIII of the Corpus Hermeticum from the book *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pœmandres*, published in Paris in 1554.

My translation is:

When, father, you in the Exoterica conversed about divinity your language was enigmatic and obscure. There was, from you, no disclosure; instead, you said no one can be rescued before the Palingenesis. Now, following our discussion as we were passing over the mountain I became your suppliant, inquiring into learning the discourse on Palingenesis since that, out of all of them, is the only one unknown to me, with you saying it would be imparted to me when I became separated from the world.

Thus I prepared myself, distancing my ethos from the treachery in the world. [6]

David Myatt  
September 2019  
Third Edition

ooo

[1] On the question of expiation, qv. my essay *Numinous Expiation* written in 2012 and included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* (International Standard Book Number 978-1484097984).

As I wrote in *Some Questions For DWM* (March 2014),

"In a very personal sense, my philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative, as are my writings concerning extremism, such as my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*.

[2] International Standard Book Number 978-1484854266.

[3] The essay *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way* outlines the change from 'the numinous way' to the philosophy of pathei-mathos. It is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/rejecting-extremism>

/development-of-the-numinous-way/

[4] An archive version of the essay is available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20130509183014/http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/moral-problems-of-national-socialism/>

[5] See for example: (i) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130602171008/http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/> and (ii) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130704131205/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

[6] David Myatt, *Eight Tractates*, 2017, International Standard Book Number 978-1976452369

---

### **A Premature Grieving**

A recent occurrence, although expected for some years, saddened me expressing as it seemed to do something about our human physis; about how for so many people our physis does not seem to have evolved that much, if at all, despite our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos.

The occurrence was the publication of a report, in two parts of which report I was repeatedly mentioned, with the author of those parts making various allegations about me for which he provided no evidence; who misattributed certain quotations to me; who made fundamental and multiple factual errors; who committed various logical fallacies; who was generally biased and dishonourable and who thus rather than promoting hope and fairness promoted old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

My resigned sadness was because for that author it was as if propaganda on behalf of some cause came before, was more important than, truth and empathy; as if there was for that author no personal belief in redemption, in the possibility of individuals changing for the better, except insofar – perchance – as such change was toward the cause he believed in; and thus as if the author was selective, judgemental, about those given the benefit of the doubt using the ideology of some cause, or their own prejudice, rather than humanity, as the criteria of judgement.

As I wrote in 2012:

"could my career as an extremist have been brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me

personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not – I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police." [1]

Instead of an empathic, a human, an honourable approach the author preferred propaganda, repeating the stereotyping he used almost two decades ago. Thus my extensive writings in the past eight years about rejecting all forms of extremism, my extensive and intensely personal writings regarding my struggle to reform myself as a result of pathei-mathos, were ignored. [2]

"Thus am I humbled, once more, by such knowing feeling of the burden made from my so heavy past; so many errors, mistakes. So many to humble me here, now, by such profusion as becomes prehension of centuries past and passing, bringing as such a passing does such gifts of they now long beyond life's ending who crafted from faith, feeling, experience, living, love, those so rich presents replete with meaning; presenting thus to us if only for a moment – fleeting as Thrush there feeding – that knowing of ourselves as beings who by empathy, life, gifts, and love, can cease to be some cause of suffering.

For no longer is there such a need – never was there such a need – to cause such suffering as we, especially I, have caused. For are not we thinking thoughtful beings – possessed of the numinous will to love?

But my words, my words – so unlike such musick [Dunstable: Preco preheminiencie] – fail: such finite insubstantial things; such a weak conduit for that flowing of wordless feeling that, as such musick, betakes us far out beyond our causal selves to where we are, can be, should be, must be, the non-interfering beauty of a moment; a sublime life seeking only to so gently express that so gentle love that so much faith has sometimes so vainly so tried to capture, express, and manifest; as when that boyish man as monk past Compline knelt in gentleness to feel to become such peace, such a human happiness, as so many others have felt centuries past and present, one moment flowing so numinously to another." [3]

Yet, as I wrote some years ago,

"I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me.

Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many

matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (ex concessio) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason – only one – why I henceforward must live in reclusion and *in silencio*." [4]

That I have now broken such self-imposed silence is the result of my resigned sadness regarding how far we mortals still have to travel to be able to live, en masse, empathic and compassionate lives, and of how so many individuals still – from whatever personal motive or because of some cause or ideology – promote old-world hostility toward and a stereotyping of particular individuals.

Perhaps the goddess Δίκη will touch some of those so many hostile individuals, for as Aeschylus wrote,

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει:  
τὸ μέλλον δ', ἐπεὶ γένοιτ', ἂν κλύοις: πρὸ χαιρέτω:  
ἴσον δὲ τῷ προστένειν.

"Δίκη favours someone learning from adversity:  
But I shall hear of what will be, after it comes into being:  
Before then, I leave it,  
Otherwise, it is the same as a premature grieving." [5]

Which is yet one more reason why I am still learning and still have far to travel, for that recent occurrence brought a premature grieving.

Ash Wednesday 2019

[1] *A Matter of Honour*, 2012.

[2] These writings include (i) *Just My Fallible Views, Again*, (ii) *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* (pdf), (iii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* (pdf), and the letters and essays included in (iv) *Such Respectful Wordful Offerings* (pdf).

[3] *Bright Berries, One Winter*, written 22 December 2010.

[4] *Pathei-Mathos - Genesis of My Unknowing*, written in 2012.

[5] Agamemnon, 250-253.

---

### **A Perplexing Failure To Understand**

Being a slightly revised extract from a letter to friend,  
with some footnotes added post scriptum

One of the multitude of things that I have, for years, failed to understand – sans any belief in an all-powerful supra-personal deity – is why I am still alive while people like Sue and Fran – and the millions of others like them – died or were killed, too early. For they neither caused any deaths nor inflicted any suffering on another living being, human and otherwise, while I – and the millions like me, worldwide – continued to live despite having so caused, directly and/or indirectly, deaths and suffering. And in my case, directly and indirectly as my documented so lamentable extremist amoral decades – of violence, hatred, incitement, of being a "theoretician of revolution/terror" – so clearly reveal.

Yet – over twenty years after the death of Sue, and almost ten years since the death of Fran – here I am, still breathing, still pontificating. And all I have – despite years of interior reflexion – is a feeling, an intuition: of the how and why our thousand of years old human culture of pathei-mathos is important because – or so it seems to me – it might bring (at least to some others) a wordless intimation of one possible answer to such a perplexing question.

For it is a culture that includes, for example, such diverse artisements as the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus, the *Lamentations of Jeremiah* by Thomas Tallis, and the life – and death – of people such as Jesse James, Mohandas K Gandhi, and Edith Cavell; and which culture, enshrined as it is in *Studia Humanitatis*, can perchance teach some of each new generation that valuable lesson about our human physis, jumelle as our physis is [1] and thus paradoxical as we honourable/dishonourable (often hubriatic) mortals are:

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ  
πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσεν:  
πολλῶν δ' ἄνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,  
πολλὰ δ' ὃ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθεν ἄλγεα ὃν κατὰ θυμόν,  
ἀρνύμενος ἥν τε ψυχὴν καὶ νόστον ἐταίρων.  
ἀλλ' οὐδ' ὥς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ἰέμενός περ:  
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρῃσιν ἀτασθαλίῃσιν ὄλοντο,  
νήπιοι, οἳ κατὰ βοῦς Ὑπερίονος Ἡελίοιο  
ἦσθιον: αὐτὰρ ὁ τοῖσιν ἀφείλετο νόστιμον ἧμαρ

The Muse shall tell of the many adventures of that man  
Of the many stratagems  
Who, after the pillage of that hallowed citadel at Troy,  
Saw the towns of many a people and experienced their ways:  
He whose vigour, at sea, was weakened by many afflictions  
As he strove to win life for himself and return his comrades to their  
homes.  
But not even he, for all this yearning, could save those comrades  
For they were destroyed by their own immature foolishness  
Having devoured the cattle of Helios, that son of Hyperion,  
Who plucked from them the day of their returning [2]

A lesson about ourselves which so many others have attempted to communicate  
to us, as recounted in a certain tragedy:

οὕτω δ' Ἀτρέως παῖδας ὁ κρείσσων  
ἐπ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ πέμπει ξένιος  
Ζεὺς πολυάνορος ἀμφὶ γυναικὸς  
πολλὰ παλαίσματα καὶ γυιοβαρῇ  
γόνατος κονίαισιν ἐρειδομένου  
διακναιομένης τ' ἐν προτελείοις  
κάμακος θήσων Δαναοῖσι  
Τρωσὶ θ' ὁμοίως. ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν  
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον

Thus were those sons of Atreus sent forth  
By mighty Zeus, guardian of hospitality, against Alexander  
On account of that woman who has had many men.  
And many would be the limb-wearying combats  
With knees pushed into the dirt  
And spears worn-out in the initial sacrifice  
Of Trojans and Danaans alike.  
What is now, came to be  
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained [3]

and as described – millennia ago – by a certain poetess:

φαίνεται μοι κῆνος ἴσος θεοῖσιν  
ἔμμεν' ὦνηρ, ὅττις ἐνάντιός τοι  
ἰσδάνει καὶ πλάσιον ἄδυ φωνεί-  
σας ὑπακούει  
καὶ γελαίσας ἱμέροεν, τό μ' ἦ μὰν  
καρδίαν ἐν στήθεσιν ἐπτόαισεν  
ὥς γὰρ ἔς σ' ἶδω βρόχε', ὥς με φώναι-  
σ' οὐδ' ἐν ἔτ' εἴκει,  
ἀλλ' ἄκαν μὲν γλῶσσα <ἔαγε>, λέπτον  
δ' αὐτικά χρῶι πῦρ ὑπαδεδρόμηκεν,

ὀππάτεσσι δ' οὐδ' ἐν ὄρημ', ἐπιρρόμ-  
βεισι δ' ἄκουαι,  
<έκαδε μ' ἴδρως ψῦχρος κακχέεται / κὰδ' δέ ἴδρως κακχέεται>  
τρόμος δὲ  
παῖσαν ἄγρει, χλωροτέρα δὲ ποίας  
ἔμμι, τεθνάκην δ' ὀλίγω 'πιδεύης  
φαίνομ' ἔμ' αὖται

I see he who sits near you as an equal of the gods  
For he can closely listen to your delightful voice  
And that seductive laugh  
That makes the heart behind my breasts to tremble.  
Even when I glimpse you for a moment  
My tongue is stilled as speech deserts me  
While a delicate fire is beneath my skin -  
My eyes cannot see, then,  
When I hear only a whirling sound  
As I shivering, sweat  
Because all of me trembles;  
I become paler than drought-grass  
And nearer to death [4]

and as, for example, described by the scribe of an ancient Hermetic MS:

Solum enim animal homo duplex est; et eius una pars simplex, quae,  
ut Graeci aiunt οὐσιώδης, quam vocamus divinae similitudinis  
formam; est autem quadruplex quod ὑλικὸν Graeci, nos mundanum  
dicimus, e quo factum est corpus, quo circumtegitur illud quod in  
homine divinum esse iam diximus, in quo mentis divinitas tecta sola  
cum cognatis suis, id est mentis purae sensibus, secum ipsa  
conquiescat tamquam muro corporis saepta.

Humans are the only species that is jumelle, with one aspect that  
foundation which the Greeks termed οὐσιώδης and we describe as  
being akin in appearance to divinity, and yet also being quadruplex,  
termed by the Greeks ὑλικός and which we describe as worldly;  
whereby from such is the corporeal [body] that, as mentioned, is of -  
in humans - the divinity, and in which is that divine disposition, to  
which it is solely related, that is in character a singular perceivration  
and untoiling since enclosed within the corporeal. [5]

But will we - can we - mortals, en masse, read, listen, reflect, experience, and  
so learn? Or will we, as our tragic history of the past three millennia so seems  
to indicate, continue to be divided - individually, and en masse - between the  
masculous and the muliebral; between honour and dishonour; between war and  
peace; between empathy and ipseity?

I do so wish I knew. But all I have to offer, now in the fading twilight of my own



mortal life, is an appreciation (perhaps contrary, these days, to οἱ πλείονες) of what some schools, independent ('private') or otherwise, still fortunately do understand is the importance of a 'classical education', and of what may possibly be apprehended by such poor words of mine as these:

Here, sea, Skylark and such a breeze as rushes reeds  
Where sandy beach meets  
To meld with sky  
And a tumbling cumuli of cloud  
Briefly cool our Sun.

I am no one, while ageing memory flows:  
For was there ever such a bliss as this  
While the short night lasted  
And we touched kissed meshed ourselves together  
To sweat, sweating, humid,  
Fearing so many times to fully open our eyes  
Lest it all really was  
A dream

But Dawn arrived as it then arrived bringing with its light  
Loose limbs and such a reminder  
As would could should did  
Make us late that day for work.

So, here: a tiredness of age  
Brightened by such a June as this  
When sandy beach meets  
To meld with sky  
And that tumbling cumuli of cloud  
Briefly cools a Sun

For there are so many recollections of centuries of a so human love, so many memories of years – centuries – of hubris and dishonour, that I can now only live each slowly passing daylight hour *modus vivendi*:

And the lost heart stiffens and rejoices  
In the lost lilac and the lost sea voices  
And the weak spirit quickens to rebel [6]

David Myatt  
January 2015

[1] *Poëmandres* (*Corpus Hermeticum*), 15:

καὶ διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος,  
θυνητὸς μὲν διὰ τὸ σῶμα, ἀθάνατος δὲ διὰ τὸν οὐσιώδη ἄνθρωπον.

ἄθάνατος γὰρ ὦν καὶ πάντων τὴν ἐξουσίαν ἔχων τὰ θνητὰ πάσχει  
ὑποκείμενος τῇ εἰμαρμένῃ

Which is why, distinct among all other beings on Earth, mortals are  
jumelle; deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal. Yet, although  
deathless and possessing full authority, the human is still subject to  
wyrd

See also Sophocles, Antigone, v. 334 & vv. 365-36:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλε...  
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being...  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts - he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[2] Homer, Odyssey, Book 1, v. 1-9

[3] Aeschylus, Agamemnon, v. 60-68

[4] Sappho, Fragment 31

[5] Asclepius, VII, 13-20

[6] TS Eliot, Ash Wednesday

---

### **Concerning The Abstractions of Extremism and Race**

In essence, I consider an abstraction to be:

"a manifestation, possibly the primary manifestation, of  
*the-separation-of-otherness*: of a lack of empathy, and which lack  
results in some distinction being made between 'them' and 'us', and  
thus with some living being (human or otherwise) being assigned to  
some abstract category, or group, and/or regarded as the genesis of or  
some representation of some posited existing or future ideal. Often,  
some abstraction - some category or some group or some ideal - is  
imputed to have some value, higher/lower, in relation to some other  
abstraction, with the result that some abstractions are considered to

be 'worth fighting/killing/dying for', and/or regarded as 'morally superior' to or better than other different, or vaguely different, abstractions, even if such difference is illusory and thus only 'in the eye of the believer'." *Rejecting Abstractions - A Personal Lesson From Extremism*

There is thus a difference between an abstraction and a descriptor. A descriptor is just a word used to describe something which already exists and which is personally observed or is discovered, whereas an abstraction by its nature is: a generalization; a hypothesis; a posited thing; an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing; or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalizations based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Or expressed simply, a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' already is, according to its *φύσις* (physis: its nature, its being) and in accordance with wu-wei; whereas an abstraction denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowning/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

In relation to human beings, abstraction involves an assigning of individuals to some abstract category or group, and then interpreting or judging or describing those individuals according to the criteria posited for that category or group. This results in an impersonal, fallacious, presumptuous, 'knowledge' concerning those individuals, and amounts to a dehumanizing of those individuals, for a genuine knowing of them requires a personal interaction with them over a period of time and of necessity the use of the very individual faculty of empathy in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment.

Thus, as a result of such a personal knowing, an individual might be described as kind, with 'kind' being a descriptor, and neutral. As a result of using abstractions, an individual might be described as Caucasian, or as Muslim, with the abstraction, the category, Caucasian or Muslim by its nature as an abstraction imputing or conveying to others certain attributes and characteristics (of appearance, life, personality, and so on) which may or may not apply to the individual so described.

Also, and most importantly, all human manufactured abstractions ignore The Cosmic Perspective - our place in the Cosmos - and thus are a manifestation of hubris, of our arrogance, our insolence. For we human beings are simply one fragile mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies; our abstractions merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a

tendency to believe in, have faith in, and exalt.

### **Extremist and Extremism**

Are 'extremism' and 'extremist' abstractions? Personally I do not believe that they are, since I regard those terms as but useful descriptions of the character, the nature, of certain individuals and of their deeds; with such character and such deeds already having been revealed by the actions, by the life, of such individuals.

In effect, 'extremist' and 'extremism' are not ideals, but descriptors of what is known or revealed through observation and a personal knowing. A function of the empathic-knowing of an individual as that individual is.

As a result of some forty years of practical experience as an activist, I consider that an 'extremist' is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of an objective that is usually considered to be of a political or of a religious nature. Hence, for me, *extremism* is the result of such harshness as well as the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists.

Thus, and I believe quite correctly, I have described myself - categorized myself - as an extremist, as a promoter of extremism, both during my neo-nazi years and during my years propagating a harsh interpretation of Islam, an interpretation which included supporting bin Laden and the Taliban, supporting and promoting 'martyrdom operations' ('suicide attacks' by Muslims) and thus supporting and promoting attacks on, and the killing of, non-combatants.

Relevant questions here include the following: (1) Are racism and the promotion of impersonal hatred immoral, bad, harsh? (2) Is the targeting and killing of non-combatants (including women and children) immoral, harsh? According to my criteria - the criteria of my weltanschauung, The Numinous Way - the answer is that they are immoral, bad; they are divisive, impersonal (unempathic), a harsh (an extreme) manifestation of the error, the hubris, that is the-separation-of-otherness. For what is moral is compassion, the peace - the gentleness - of a personal shared love; what is fair, honourable, kind; what manifests the gentility of wu-wei, what manifests the empathic knowing of individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment.

In the simple sense, all individuals we do not personally know - whom we have not interacted with personally and who thus are unknown to us via, who are inaccessible to, our faculty of empathy - are or should be presumed to be 'innocent', unjudged. Given the benefit of the doubt. For that is the fair, the honourable, the empathic, the humane, thing to do. Thus to promote impersonal goals and objectives - abstractions such as 'suicide attacks' or the hatred and prejudice of racism - which badly affect, harshly impinge upon, which hurt, injure, or kill people we do not know, is assuredly wrong.

My character during my extremist years - or at least the dominant part of my character at the time - was certainly harsh or tended toward being harsh, since my motivation was to harshly pursue, if necessary by violent means, some harsh impersonal goal, some harsh impersonal objective, to engage in activities, with the aim of trying to bring that goal, that objective into-being; with the attainment of that goal, that objective, having immoral priority over virtues such as personal love, personal happiness, compassion, empathy, peace, kindness, and honour. In effect, my life - my deeds, my behaviour, my words (spoken and written) - revealed, proved, that I was indeed an extremist promoting extremism; that I was immoral; that I acted unethically and that I promoted and championed and violently strived for what was wrong.

There is thus in my case - and in the case of others like me - only an acknowledgement of the facts and a recognition of what is moral and what is immoral. For the criteria used are proven deeds, a character directly revealed - individual to individual - by such deeds, and a knowing, an acceptance, by us of what is immoral, bad, wrong.

## **Race**

As mentioned in *FAQ About The Numinous Way* dated 9/March/2012 -

" Race is a manifestation of the causal separation-of-otherness, and thus contradicts empathy and the intuitive knowing of and sympathy with *the living other* that individual empathy provides or can make us aware of.

The notion of race separates, divides, human beings into manufactured lifeless categories which nullify the empathic knowing of individual human beings. Such assignment of individuals to a posited abstract category - some assumed 'race' or sub-race - is irrelevant, since individual human beings are or have the potential to be unique individual human beings, so that such an assignment, whatever the alleged reason, is a dehumanizing of those individuals. For our humanity is expressed by an individual and personal knowing of individuals, by a personal interaction with others on the basis of respect, tolerance, reason, and honour, and which personal knowledge of them renders their alleged or assumed ethnicity or ancestry irrelevant."

A human being is an individual person who is unique or who has the capacity to be unique, the capacity to develop their uniqueness. Those human beings, those unique individuals, who are not personally known to us, are because they are unknown to us - being thus unseen, unfelt, by our sense, our faculty, of

empathy - cannot, should not, be judged by us, or be the subject of or assessed using the assumptions made by us or presented to us by others whether in spoken or in written form. Such is the foundation of The Numinous Way, of the personal weltanschauung I have developed by means of pathei-mathos, where empathy via a direct and extended personal knowing is regarded as the only moral way to really know, to assess, an individual, to discover their physis, their character.

Thus the alleged or assumed 'race' of a person is irrelevant; unimportant. To assume things about someone on the basis of their alleged or assumed 'race' is wrong, contrary to the ethic of empathy and to the honour, the fairness, the compassion, that manifest the knowing that empathy teaches and reveals to us. For 'race' is a supra-personal categorization, an impersonal large-scale grouping, in which the human faculty of empathy, and thus a direct personal knowing of individuals, play no part.

Furthermore, 'race' - however defined - is an abstraction. An ideal and/or a generalization, and a generalization which even taxonomically has no relevance. Thus, even the observed physical, physiological, genetic - the biological - characteristics which have been said to or are alleged to differentiate one human race from another and thus to possibly define separate human races are irrelevant because such differentiation or definitions are by their very nature medians, or assumptions extrapolated from limited data, or an interpretation of data according to a hypothesis, and all of which data are static, time-dependant, relating as they do to a perceived or an assumed commonality existing or alleged to exist 'now' or at some static moment in time but which perceived or assumed commonality did not necessarily exist in the past and will probably, almost certainly, not exist in the future.

For in reality humans change, through social interaction and migration, over millennia so that, for example, some posited so-called 'race' said to exist now in some specific geographic location did not exist twenty thousand years ago (probably not even ten thousand years ago) and the peoples allegedly said to be of this race are and always have been in flux, changing, adapting, assimilating, being assimilated, migrating.

To define such a static 'race' there has to be assumptions made about 'when' it allegedly came into being and about what median values are used to determine if a specific individual 'belongs to' such a race.

But all life - human and otherwise - changes, is subject to change, is in flux. Life changes as it changes [1] and has changed as it has been changed. This is the wisdom of wu-wei; of the physis of things: of beings, of life. To make some posited category the 'ideal' and thus to impute an importance to, and try to preserve, such a static impermanent human-manufactured impersonal 'thing' over and above the flux of life, over and above the wu-wei of individuals, over and above the morality of empathy, compassion, fairness, and over and above

the wu-wei of love, is wrong, inhuman, immoral, contrary to the physis of life itself. It is hubris, an ignorance of, or an arrogant disregarding of, The Cosmic Perspective, and thus is a cause of suffering because it upsets the natural balance, the natural harmony, of life.

March 2012

*Notes*

[1]

ἔστι δ' ὅπη νῦν  
ἔστι: τελεῖται δ' ἐς τὸ πεπρωμένον:  
οὔθ' ὑποκαίων οὔθ' ὑπολείβων  
οὔτε δακρύων ἀπύρων ἱερῶν  
ὀργὰς ἀτενεῖς παραθέλξει

*Aesch. Ag. 67-71*

What is now, came to be  
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.  
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,  
No unburnt offering  
Can charm away that firm resolve

---

*Acknowledgement:* This text summarizes my replies to questions submitted to me in - or which arose during - recent correspondence with several individuals, some of whom raised various objections to my Numinous Way, especially in relation to the concept of 'race' and my use of terms such as 'extremist' and 'extremism'.

---

## **Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate**

### **Part One: According to the Philosophy of The Numinous Way**

#### **Introduction**

The ethical criteria of The Numinous Way will be used to consider the politics <sup>[1]</sup> and the ideology <sup>[2]</sup> of hate - that is, to consider: (i) those beliefs and/or ideas which produce or which engender or which incite <sup>[3]</sup> in people an intense dislike of or an extreme or violent aversion to some other people or group and/or of or toward opposing beliefs and/or toward opposing ideas; and (ii) the actions and the political activities of those motivated by or pursuing some ideology that inclines them toward hatred or which produces hatred.

Specific examples will be restricted to two sets of beliefs/ideas, firstly that conventionally termed 'extreme right-wing'/fascist/neo-nazi, and secondly that conventionally termed radical Islam<sup>[4]</sup>, and so restricted for the simple reason that I have personal practical experience of such beliefs/ideas and have also studied them in detail. In the former case, my experience and study amounts to some thirty years; in the latter case, to around nine years.

### **The Criteria of The Numinous Way**

The criteria of The Numinous Way is the revealing - the insight, the knowing, the understanding, the feeling - that the faculty of empathy provides when we, as an individual, personally interact with another living being over a certain period of time. What is thus discovered by means of empathy is *sympatheia* - a numinous sympathy with the-living-other - and how, as an individual, we are an affecting connexion to all life, and thus how our assumed separation, as an individual, is an illusion, a manifestation of hubris. We therefore become aware of how we affect or can affect others; how they affect or can affect us; and of how their suffering, their pain, their joy, their grief, is ours beyond the barrier of our inner and our outer egoist.

This discovery, this revealing, thus inclines us toward compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, love, tolerance, peace, fairness, wu-wei <sup>[5]</sup>, and toward being non-judgemental in respect of those we do not personally know and thus have no experience of, have had no empathic contact with. For it is empathy - the close and the extended personal interaction with individuals, on an individual basis, that empathy requires - that is the natural and the moral way of assessing, of really knowing, another human being.

This means two important things. First, that we treat human beings in a human way - that is, as individuals, recognizing that they are unique or have the potential to become unique; that they, like us, can and do suffer pain, grief, sadness, joy; that they, like us, have hopes, dreams. Second, that all individuals we do not personally know are or should be presumed to be 'innocent', unjudged, and so are to be given the benefit of the doubt; for this presumption of innocence - until personal experience and empathic individual knowing of them prove otherwise - is the fair, the honourable, the moral thing to do.

### **The Ideology and Politics of Hate**

For an ideology to cause, provoke, or incite hatred - or which inclines people toward hatred or which of itself embodies hate - it is logical to assume that there has to be two components at work given that hatred is an intense personal emotion which can predispose a person or persons toward or cause anger and thence violence, and given that an ideology by its nature is supra-personal, that is, a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals.



My experience leads me to suggest that the first component is prideful identity, and that the second component is the ideal, the goal, of the ideology. For this given and accepted identity is always supra-personal and always imparts a needed sense of belonging, a meaning to life, just as the goal, the ideal, involves individuals committing themselves in a manner which vivifies, removes doubt, and imparts a sense of purpose, with the result that individuality becomes subsumed with duty and loyalty to the goal, the ideal, given a high priority in the life of the individual.

Ideologies such as National-Socialism - new or old - and radical Islam are predicated on identity, a pride in that identity, and on the need to affirm that identity through practical deeds. In the case of National-Socialism, there is a personal identification with one's assumed race, a pride in what is believed to be the achievements and the potential of this race, and a desire to aid one's race and its 'destiny' by opposing 'race-mixing'. In the case of radical Islam, there is the sense of belonging to the Ummah, a 'comradeship', a certain pride in Islam and its superiority; a feeling of the need to undertake or at least support Jihad, and a desire to counter the kuffar in practical ways, all deriving from the belief that this is what Allah has commanded we do.

The identity so assumed or presumed produces or can produce resentment, anger - caused by a perceived or a felt disparity between *the now* and *the assumed ideal*, past or future.

For an essential part of such ideologies is that it is believed that in the past some posited ideal community or society or people or way of life existed and that the present is a deviation from or a loss of the 'perfection' that then existed; a deviation or a loss that the ideology explains by the assumption of a simple cause and effect, or several simple causes and effects, a simple linearity between *the now* and *the goal* (future) and/or the idealized past. Thus the problems or the conditions of the present are assumed to have certain identifiable supra-personal causes, just as the path to the goal is regarded as requiring that those causes be dealt with. In addition, these causes are often or mostly the work of 'others'; not our fault, but instead the result of 'our enemies', and/or of some opposing ideology. That is, someone, or some many, or some 'thing', is or are to blame.

Hence in order to return to this past perfection - or in order to create a new form of this past perfection, this past ideal, or in order to create a new perfection inspired by some past ideal - our enemies, and/or opposing ideologies and those adhering to them, must be dealt with. There must therefore be struggle; the notion of future victory; and at the very least political activity and propaganda directed toward political goals - a moving toward regaining the authority, the power, the influence which supporters of an ideology believe or assume they and their kind have lost and which they almost invariably believe are now 'in the hands of their enemies' and/or of traitors and 'heretics'.

In effect, perceived enemies, those having authority/power, and those perceived as adhering to opposing or detrimental ideologies/beliefs or living in a manner seen as detrimental, become dehumanized, are judged en masse in a prejudiced manner, and become disliked, with this dislike naturally - because of the struggle for 'victory' - becoming intolerance, harshness, and thence, almost invariably at some time, turning to anger thence to hatred with such hatred often resulting in violence against individual 'enemies'. <sup>[6]</sup>

Such hatred and intolerance are the natural, the inevitable, consequence of all ideologies founded on notions of identity which glorify past glories or assumed past perfections, which posit some abstract goal or some future ideal and which involve a struggle against enemies to achieve such a goal or such an ideal.

For there is symbiosis, an empowering of the individual, with the very notion of identity and meaning being dependant on notions about past glories, on inclusion/exclusion, on notions of superiority/inferiority, on posited enemies, on obstacles, and of a striving, a struggle, for an ideal, for some posited goal. And vice versa. This is the intoxicating elixir of extremism, a symbiosis born of, which engenders and which flourishes on division, divide, intolerance, pride, struggle, goals, and hate; a division, divide, an intolerance, a hatred, that possibly are at their worst, their most vitriolic, when based on ethnicity, or involve religions, or involve perceived or assumed 'heretical' divisions within a religion.

In terms of nazi and neo-nazi ideology for example, Aryans are and have been 'the light-bearers of civilization'; the enemies are the Jews and their machinations, inferior non-Aryan races, and ideologies such as 'multi-culturalism' and liberalism; while the goal is a racially pure Aryan nation, and/or a strong and militarized National-Socialist State with a mission, a destiny, to 'civilize' the world through kampf.

In terms of modern right-wing extremism, as manifest for example by certain nationalist political groups in European countries, the 'civilization of the West' - in which many such groups now include Israel <sup>[7]</sup> - is the ideal because it is morally superior; the enemies (the hated inferiors) are Muslims and other 'immigrants'; with an idealized and resurgent 'European culture and identity' (manifest in strong nation-States of 'native Europeans' and/or in a return to communities based on 'European traditions') having replaced the nazi/fascist ideal of a National-Socialist/Fascist State and with 'past glories' celebrated and idealized and used to motivate and inspire pride and develop a sense of urgency about the 'threat' posed by enemies and by the loss of national/cultural 'identity'.

In terms of radical Islam, the enemies (the hated inferiors) are Amerika, Israel, Muslim collaborators, and decadent kuffar, with the goal being a resurgent Khilafah or at least the implementation of Shariah as the only law at first in

Muslim lands and then elsewhere.

### **A Numinous Approach**

Activists and even many supporters of such ideologies find meaning, worth, identity, empowerment, in the inclusion, in the collectivity, the belonging, that such ideologies assert or assume, and thus their knowing of themselves and of others, and thence their 'ethics' (or lack of ethics) are or become determined by the boundaries set by such ideologies. The boundaries of enemies; of traitors; of those 'different from us/inferior to us'; of obstacles to be overcome in the struggle toward victory; of sacrifice for the cause; of conformity to guidelines for living laid down by a leader or leaders or ideologues or 'the party' or set out in some political programme, or book, or tract, or speech, or manifesto.

What therefore is lost or tends to become lost because of such boundaries, such collectivity, is empathy; wu-wei; notions of the innocence - the non-judgement - of those we do not personally know; *sympatheia* with others on an individual basis; and a desire to treat every human being as an individual sans all ideological boundaries, sans all prejudice, sans abstractions of inclusion/exclusion, sans all notions of 'them' and 'us', and sans all rhetoric and propaganda about a struggle for victory, and about the 'urgency of the situation'.

For such ideologies manifest *the-separation-of-otherness* and which error of hubris is the foundation, the essence, of all abstractions<sup>[8]</sup>, and which *separation-of-otherness* is the genesis of supra-personal, ideological, hatred and intolerance, usurping as such ideologies do with their collective empowerment and their supra-personal authority the empathy of the individual, the unique individual judgement that arises from such empathy, the necessity of interior personal spiritual (numinous) development, and the wu-wei, the compassion, the fairness, the tolerance, the humanity, that empathy by its revealing inclines us toward.

As such, those ideologies, born of and manifesting hubris, ignoring or disrespectful as they are of the numinous, and attempting as they do to redefine the ethical, are therefore - it seems to me - immoral, and lamentable.

2012

### *Notes*

[1] Politics, as used here, means both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific

geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

Ideology, as used here, means a coherent, organized, and distinctive set of beliefs and/or ideas or ideals, and which beliefs and/or ideas and/or ideals pertain to governance, and/or to society, and/or to matters of a philosophical or a spiritual nature.

The term society, as used here, means a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence.

[2] For the usage, here, of the term ideology see footnote 1.

[3] Incitement is used here in the sense of 'to instigate' or to provoke or to cause or to 'urge others to'.

[4] By radical Islam is meant the belief that practical Jihad against 'the enemies of Islam' and the occupiers of Muslim lands is an individual duty incumbent upon every able-bodied Muslim; that Muslims should live among Muslims under the guidance of Shariah; that Muslims should return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah and distance themselves from the ways and the influence of the kuffar. Many radical Muslims also support the restoration of the Khilafah and are intolerant of those Muslims they consider have allied themselves with the kuffar.

[5] Wu-wei is an important part of The Numinous Way, with the term being used to mean a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, wu-wei is the cultivation of a certain (empathic, numinous) perspective - that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature

(the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

[6] One aspect of all extremist ideologies, of the politics and ideologies of hate, that has intrigued me for some time is their explicit or their implicit patriarchal ethos; their masculine bias; their stridency, their lack of not only empathy but also of those qualities that are ineluctably feminine, caring, nurturing, and thus which tend toward balancing the hubriatic male qualities such as harshness, fanaticism, *kampf*, and militarism, which such ideologies laud.

This bias toward overt masculinity, toward machismo, possibly explains why such harsh, such extremist ideologies - and often the supporters of such ideologies - dislike, are intolerant of, or even hate, pacifists, Sapphic ladies, gay men, and even sensitive artistic men who are not gay.

[7] The support for Israel by such groups has led to some political commentators regarding such support by such extremists as either cynical opportunism or as some attempt to gain political credibility and thus an attempt to distance themselves from nazism and fascism even though their whole agenda, their trumpeting of 'European civilization and culture', their nationalism, their dislike of 'immigrants' and especially of Muslims, seems to place them within the sphere of those ideologies. For instance, these extremists seem to have simply made Muslims, and 'immigrants' in general, the 'new Jews'.

[8] The Numinous Way understands an abstraction as the manufacture, and use of, some idea, ideal, 'image', form, or category, and thus some generalization about, and/or some assignment of an individual or individuals - and/or some being, some 'thing' - to some group or category with the implicit acceptance of the separateness, in causal Space-Time, of such a being/beings/things /individuals. This assignment of human beings to some abstraction (some abstract category) - such as Negro or Jew or 'traitor' or 'heretic' or 'prostitute' - always involves either some pejorative judgement being made about an individual on the basis of the qualities or the attributes that are believed or assumed to belong to that abstraction, or some idealization/glorification of those so assigned (such as some idealized 'Aryan race').

The positing of some 'perfect' or 'ideal' form, category, or thing, is part of abstraction.

Thus understood, abstraction encompasses terms such as ideology, idea, dogmatic/harsh beliefs, and ideals.

## Part Two

### A Personal Perspective - My Uncertainty of Knowing

#### The Bad of Extremists

For some forty years, from 1968 to around 2008, I as a fanatical idealist placed some ideal - some illusory, some believed in perfection - before people, hubristically believing (as fanatics and extremists always seem to do) that some ideology <sup>[1]</sup> and its attempted implementation was more important than personal love, than fairness, than compassion, than kindness, than tolerance, than empathy, than peace, than wu-wei.

Thus, as a fanatical idealist, I was so dissatisfied, so discontented, with the societies of the West - especially with the society I regarded as my homeland, the United Kingdom - that I actively sought to undermine and change them by political and revolutionary means, by incitement to disaffection and even by terror.

For the first thirty years of this discontent (1968-1998) my desire was to establish, in Britain, a neo-nazi - a racist - society, believing as I did in the superiority of 'the Aryan race' and enamoured as I was of National-Socialist Germany and of Hitler's struggle for power between 1919 and 1933. Thus the idealized, the romanticized, National-Socialism I believed in and the historically-inaccurate NS Germany I admired were my inspiration, and with the dedication and the hardness and harshness of a fanatic, an extremist, I joined several racist, fascist, neo-nazi, and paramilitary organizations; engaged in street brawls, wrote and distributed propaganda, gave vitriolic speeches; organized demonstrations, incited hatred and violence; founded two new neo-nazi groups; was imprisoned for violence and arrested nearly a dozen times for a variety of other criminal offences.

Between 1998 and 2008 - following my conversion to Islam - my activities were directed toward undermining the societies of the West (and especially those of Britain and America) and toward aiding Muslims fighting elsewhere - undertaking Jihad - for the establishment, in their lands, of Shariah as the only law.

During these forty extremist years I ranted and I railed against what I believed were 'the problems of the West', the 'decadence of the West', and propagandistically trumpeted the ideal type of society I believed in and thus considered was better than all existing societies. During my neo-nazi years, this ideal, this idealized, society was a new National-Socialist one, an ideal that I in perhaps some small way helped create through voluminous writings written during the 1990's with titles such as *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, *Why National-Socialism Is Not Racist*, and *The Complete Guide to the Aryan Way of*

*Life*. During my Jihadi-supporting years, this ideal, this idealized, society was one inspired by the Khilafah and was to be established in some Muslim land or lands by a return to the pure guidance of Quran and Sunnah, and by Jihad 'against apostates, and the kuffar and their collaborators'.

The error here - the error I persisted in for some forty years - is the error of faulty, unbalanced, judgement, deriving from extremism and hubris; an error that leads to, that develops, that nurtures, bad individuals and thus leads to inhumanity, to violence, prejudice, anger, discontent, hatred, brutality, terrorism. An error caused both by the distorted view of people and of existing societies that extremist ideologies cause or at least encourage, and by some ideal, some ideology, being cherished more than human beings.

For the personal fault of extremists seems to be that of being unable and/or unwilling to view, to consider, the good that exists in people, in society, and/or of ignoring the potential for good, or change toward the good, which is within people, within society, within what-is. To prefer the dream in their head to reality; and/or to prefer the struggle, the strife, the conflict, to stability and peace; and/or to need or to desire repeated stimulation/excitement. One cause of such things could, in my view - from my experience - be the inability or the unwillingness of a person, an extremist, to develop and use their own individual judgement, as well as the inability or the unwillingness to take individual, moral, responsibility for their actions and for the effects those actions personally have upon people. Thus violence, prejudice, hatred, brutality, killing, and terror, are not judged by the moral criteria of how they affect and harm people but instead by whether they aid the goal - the implementation of the cherished ideal - or, worst of all, by whether they provide excitement and/or provide the individual with a sense of purpose, a 'destiny', a sense of being special, a 'hero' to their kindred extremists, or at least of being remembered.

In my own case, I justified what I did - my extremism - by appeals to the goal I ardently believed in and ardently desired, and thus ignored or overlooked or dismissed as unimportant the many benefits that Western societies provide and have provided, concentrating instead on the faults, the problems, of such societies, or on assumed faults and problems. In addition, and most importantly, I arrogantly felt I 'knew', that I 'understood' - that I, or my cherished beliefs, my ideology, were right; correct, *the* solution to all problems, personal and of society, and that these problems urgently needed to be dealt with. There was, therefore, a desire in me to interfere, to act, based on this arrogant misplaced feeling of having 'the right answers', of being right; of having 'seen the flaws' in society and/or in people.

In addition, my judgement derived from, was based on, was dependant upon, The Cause, the ideology; and so was unbalanced, bad, flawed. For The Cause, the ideology, gave meaning and set the boundaries, the limits, of knowing, of doing. For example, in the case of National-Socialism, there was the boundary of duty, which was "to promote National-Socialism [and] to strive to act in

accord with Nature's will by preserving, defending and evolving one's own folk."<sup>[2]</sup> There was the meaning of 'pursuing idealism/excellence/the will of Nature' over and above 'personal happiness' as well as the need to 'overthrow the existing System based on materialism'<sup>[3]</sup>. There was the knowing that 'race and Nature' defined us as human beings so that our most essential knowledge was to know our kind, our 'destiny', and the 'will of Nature', a will manifest, for example, in *kampf* and idealized in such abstractions as 'a new Reich', *Homo Galactica*, a Galactic Imperium, and so on and so forth.

The flawed judgement, the lack of critical balance - the lack of humanity - that resulted meant that I did not take individual responsibility for the harm I caused, I inflicted, I incited. Instead, I shifted the responsibility onto the ideology, thus justifying or trying to justify the consequences of my deeds, of my incitement, by appeals to the ideology ('the end justifies the means') and by the belief that the ideology needed to be urgently implemented 'for the good of the people', with 'the people' of course always being viewed abstractly (as a race or folk), being idealized or romanticized and divorced from, or more usually considered as being built from, the harsh consequences of striving to implement such a harsh ideology.

Therefore, it seems to me now that a reasonable illustration of extremism might be to liken it to some contagious disease, some sickness, or some ailment. One that alters not only the behaviour of individuals but also their perception, their thinking; how they perceive the world; and one that inclines them toward being bad and toward ignoring the good that already exists in society and the credit due to society for aiding such good. A disease or an ailment or a sickness that inclines them toward acting in an unbalanced and unethical manner, disruptive to other people and disruptive to society, and careless of, or indifferent to, the harm they do, the suffering they cause.

### **The Good of Society**

The simple truth of the present and so evident to me now - in respect of the societies of the West, and especially of societies such as those currently existing in America and Britain - is that for all their problems and all their flaws they seem to be much better than those elsewhere, and certainly better than what existed in the past. That is, that there is, within them, a certain tolerance; a certain respect for the individual; a certain duty of care; and certainly still a freedom of life, of expression, as well as a standard of living which, for perhaps the majority, is better than elsewhere in the world and most certainly better than existed there and elsewhere in the past.

In addition, there are within their structures - such as their police forces, their governments, their social and governmental institutions - people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, who strive to do what is good, right. Indeed, far more good people in such places than bad people, so that a certain balance, the balance of goodness, is maintained even though occasionally (but not for long)



that balance may seem to waver somewhat.

Furthermore, many or most of the flaws, the problems, within such societies are recognized and openly discussed, with a multitude of people of good will, of humanity, of fairness, dedicating themselves to helping those affected by such flaws, such problems. In addition, there are many others trying to improve those societies, and to trying find or implement solutions to such problems, in tolerant ways which do not cause conflict or involve the harshness, the violence, the hatred, of extremism. <sup>[4]</sup>

This truth about the good <sup>[5]</sup> in our current societies, so evident now, leads me to ask how could I not have seen it before? How can extremists, in general, not see, understand, appreciate, this truth? How can they - as I once did - seek to destroy that balance; destroy all that such societies, despite their flaws and their problems, have achieved? How can they ignore the good work of the plethora of individuals seeking to change those societies for the better in a reasoned and tolerant manner?

I can only, in truth, answer for myself, based on some years of introspection. As an extremist in thrall to an ideology and thus seeking to disrupt, change, to overthrow an existing society - to incite disaffection - I had no reason, no incentive, to emphasize the good that had and has been wrought by successive governments, by the introduction of laws, and by the people, such as the police and the security services, who in their majority tried from the best of motives to do and to uphold what was good by striving to counter and bring to justice those who were bad, those who in some way harmed or sought to harm others from whatever motive and for whatever reason.

Indeed, I was for the most part wilfully ignorant of this good, and when mention or experience of it could not be ignored for some reason, or might prove useful for propaganda purposes, what was good was almost always attributed to something which the parameters of the ideology allowed for. For instance, the good actions of an heroic policeman would be judged by the parameters of whether he was 'Aryan' - in which case 'the good' resulted from him being Aryan, having an Aryan nature - or whether those actions in some way, however small, helped 'us' and our Cause, as for example if the person in question had dealt with and caught 'black people' rioting or committing crimes. There was thus a biased, a blinkered, a prejudiced, a bigoted view of both events and people.

In my own case, and for example, I have some forty years experience of interaction with the police, from ordinary constables and detectives, to custody sergeants, to officers from specialist branches such as SO12, SO13, and crime squads. During that time, I have known far more good police officers than bad - corrupt - ones. Furthermore, I realized that most of those I came into contact with were good individuals, motivated by the best of intentions, who were trying to do their best, often under difficult circumstances, and often to help victims of

dishonourable deeds, catch those responsible for such deeds, and/or prevent such deeds.

But what did I during my extremist years attribute their honourable motivation, their good character, to? Yes, of course - to them being 'Aryans' who just happened to be in the police force. Or, on one occasion, to having an 'Aryan nature' (accorded honorary Aryan status) even though the officer in question was 'of mixed race'... Thus the ideology I adhered to, I believed in, set the parameters of my judgement; prompted the correct ideological response <sup>[6]</sup>.

But in truth they, those officers, as one of them once said to me, were guided by what 'was laid down' and did not presume to or tried hard not to overstep their authority; guided as they were by the law, that accumulated received wisdom of what was and is good in society; a law which (at least in Britain and so far as I know) sought to embody a respect for what was fair and which concept of fairness was and always has been (again, at least in Britain and so far as I know) untainted, uncorrupted, by any political ideology.

Now I know, I understand, I appreciate, that for that reason - of so being mindful of the limits of their authority, of being guided by what had been laid down over decades - those people, those police officers, were far better individuals than the arrogant, the hubristic, extremist I was; an arrogant extremist who by and for himself presumed 'to know' what was right, who presumed to understand, who presumed he possessed the ability, the authority, and the right to judge everyone and everything, and who because of such arrogance, such hubris, most certainly continued to contribute to the cycle of suffering, ignoring thus for so long as he in his unbalance did the wisdom that Aeschylus gave to us in *The Oresteia*.

### **Balance and The Uncertainty of Knowing**

One error of unbalance and of hubris - and an error which is one of the foundations of extremism - is that of allowing or of encouraging some imagined, idealized, or posited, future to affect one's judgement, and/or to determine one's actions, and behaviour in the present.

Thus one becomes not only dissatisfied with what-is, but concerned with - if not to some extent obsessed with - what *should-be* or what *might-be* if what should-be (the goal or ideal of the extremist ideology) is not realized or not fought for. Furthermore, this assumed *what-might-be* is often the result of someone making some generalization or some prediction based on some ideology and which ideology, being an ideology - an abstraction - is founded on the simplicity of linear cause-and-effect and of problems/enemies having to be dealt with in order for some perfect future or some ideal or some victory to be achieved or brought-into-being. That is, *what-might-be* - and extremist action and incitement based upon it - requires a certainty of knowing.

This is one error I persisted in even after - as a result of pathei-mathos - I began to fully develop my philosophy of The Numinous Way with its emphasis on empathy, compassion, humility, and personal honour. An error which, for example, led to me, for some two or more years, to eviscerate the abstraction of 'the clan' as some sort of embodiment of 'the numinous' and of honour and as an idealized means of manufacturing a new type of society as if such a future, such an assumed, hypothesized, society might offset some of the suffering in the world.

An error which the uncertainty of empathic knowing most certainly reveals. For empathy - the living, the numinous, way to know another living being - is a sympathy, sans all ideations, with a living being in the immediacy-of-the-moment and involves an individualized proximity, and thus discovers only the knowing of that one living being as that living being is in that one moment, or those moments, of empathy. A discovery applicable to only that specific being and a knowing which some future empathic discovery in respect of that same being might change. For living beings are subject to change; their life is a flow, possessed of an a-causal living nature; and thus another encounter with that same living being may reveal it changed, altered - perhaps better, or matured - in some manner. Certainly, in respect of human beings, pathei-mathos is or can be a vector of interior change.

Thus, the faculty of empathy - over a succession of moments linked in causal time by a duration of days, weeks, or months - may intimate to us something about the character, the nature, the physis, of another person. A subsequent meeting with that individual - months, years, later - may intimate a change in that nature, possibly as a result of pathei-mathos.

There thus arises the knowing of the wu-wei, the humanity, of empathy; a knowing of the transient, the a-causal, nature of the living-knowing, the revealing, the a-causal knowledge, that empathy may provide, and hence the need not to judge, not to prejudge, some past or future living being (or even the same being once known) unknown to, or as yet untouched by, such empathy or by another empathic encounter. For certitude of knowing - presumed, assumed, or otherwise - is causal, fixed, or the result of some posited linear extrapolation of such a static causal knowing into the future or back into some past.

Extremism - of whatever type - depends on this certitude of knowing, past and future, and which certitude amounts to a tyranny against the flow of life; certainly there is a lack of empathy, as well as the imposition of and thence the cultivation of a rigid harshness within the psyche of the individual which at best displaces, or which can displace, the human capacity for pathei-mathos, and which at worst may remove the capacity for pathei-mathos.

The future certitude of this hubristic knowing is the given and fixed goal or ideal; and the certitude of struggle being necessary to reach that future goal or

make real that ideal. The past certitude is of a given idealized past and/or of past glories (if indeed they were glories). And the present certitude is that of identity - of 'we' being different from and better than 'them'. A certitude of identity and of assumed difference that gives rise to prejudice, hatred, intolerance, and all the other characteristics of the extremist.

Thus, for a neo-nazi or a racist, 'Aryans' (or 'Whites') are regarded as superior to 'blacks' and Jews, and the 'separation of the races' is regarded as the ideal goal. This superiority is a given, an affirmed, certitude, and regarded as fixed, past, present, future, and applicable to most if not all of the 'inferior' group or groups. There is thus no uncertainty of knowing in the individual; no interior balance; no wu-wei; no empathic discovery of the character, the nature, the physis, of other individuals as individuals in the immediacy-of-the moment; no allowance made for change, even by *pathei-mathos*. There is only harshness; generalization, supposition, assumption; a rigid adherence; the arrogance of certainty, of 'knowing' some are superior/inferior, that there is black/white, Aryan/Jew; that separation is 'necessary' and desirable. A need for stasis, and/or the desire to inhumanly try to make living, changing, individual, human beings fit some static category and thence the prejudice and intolerance and hatred based on or resulting from such an assumed or idealized static category.

As I know from my own experience, the certitude of knowing and the certitude of identity that an ideology provides displaces personal love, fairness, compassion, kindness, tolerance, empathy, peace, and wu-wei; or at least assigns to them a far lower importance than hate, injustice, harshness, intolerance, prejudice, strife, and disaffection to society, to what-is. Such certitude, such a lack of the humanity of empathy, also provides us with a fixed, an - according to my *pathei-mathos*, my experience - incorrect, answer to an important question attributed to Aeschylus and asked over two thousand years ago, and which fixed incorrect answer encourages, breeds, plants, the *τύραννος* within us <sup>[7]</sup> - our hubris, our inner egoist - and which wrong answer encourages, which breeds, which plants, tyrannical societies as well as allowing such a *τύραννος* as Hitler to gain an abundance of followers obedient to his hubriatic will.

The important question is *τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός* <sup>[8]</sup>. And the fixed and the incorrect answer is always the same: some leader, some *τύραννος*, some sovereign, some ideology, some goal, some rigid identity, is there to guide us, to provide us with meaning, to justify our actions. To explain away or justify our lack of empathy, our lack of compassion, our intolerance, our suspicion, our hatred; our lack of wu-wei; and our lack of respect of the numinous, our lack of respect for other life, for human beings different from us. A wrong answer to explain our amnesia, our forgetting or ignorance of the wisdom of the past; a wisdom embodied in what - at least according to my admittedly fallible judgement, born from my *pathei-mathos* - is the correct answer given to that question asked thousands of years ago and which correct answer is in my view an excellent reply to extremism. An answer which embodies that uncertainty of

knowing that is the essence of balance and which uncertainty the faculty of empathy makes us aware of. For the answer to preventing the extremism of hubris, to who guides us, who steers us, to whom we should look, and whom respect, is: *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* <sup>[9]</sup>.

April 2012

### Notes

[1] I have outlined, in part one, what I mean by terms such as ideology, society, politics, and wu-wei. As explained in several other essays - such as *Ethos of Extremism* - by extreme I mean *to be harsh*, so that an *extremist* is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature; where *harsh* is understood as rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

[2] *The Meaning of National-Socialism* (dated 108yf, i.e. 1997)

[3] *ibid.*

[4] In my essay *Society, Social Reform, and The Numinous Way* (dated February 2012) I briefly touched upon 'a numinous approach' to social change and reform. Which was the apolitical, non-violent one of personal example, and of fostering, encouraging, the natural, slow, interior and personal change of individuals.

[5] The good is what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what empathy by its revealing inclines us to do.

[6] It was such experiences - personal and political - which eventually, after two and half decades, prompted me in the late 1990's to modify my ideology and thus develop what I termed non-racist 'ethical National-Socialism'. But even that did not alter my commitment to extremism, my extremist activities, and my desire to undermine and overthrow British society.

[7] *ὑβρις φυτεύει τύραννον*. 'Hubris plants the tyrant.' Sophocles: *Oedipus Tyrannus*, v. 872.

[8] "Who then compels to steer us?" *Aeschylus* [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 515

[9] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!" *Aeschylus* [attributed], *Prometheus Bound*, 516.

---

## **Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism**

### **Introduction**

This essay is a brief analysis of the National-Socialist weltanschauung, as manifested in National-Socialist Germany, and according to the philosophical and ethical criteria of my Numinous Way, and which criteria derive from the principles of empathy, compassion, and personal honour.

Empathy, as understood by my philosophy of The Numen [1], establishes a particular ontology and epistemology; Being, the source of beings, as both causal and acausal, and of an acausal knowing distinct from the causal knowing of conventional philosophy and empirical science [2]. The ethical criteria are manifest in both compassion and honour [3], so that:

"the morality of The Numinous Way is therefore defined by a personal honour, a personal compassion, and the personal virtue of justice. For justice is not some abstract concept, but rather a personal virtue, as *εὐταξία* is a personal virtue. For justice is the personal virtue of fairness; the quality of balance." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

The National-Socialism evident in NS Germany was a way of life centred around concepts such as duty, *kampf*, nation, and race. Thus, the individual was judged by, and expected to judge others by, the criteria of race, with particular races assigned a certain value (high or low), as individuals were judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land, their people) and the race they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, *kampf* between individuals, races, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

### **Collectivism, Nationalism, and Race**

The National-Socialist way of life was – given such concepts as *kampf*, nation and race – a collective one, with one of the highest virtues being the willingness of individuals, if necessary, to sacrifice their own happiness and welfare, and even their lives, for the good of their people, their land, their race. The necessity of this virtue was explained, in part, by the belief that the German *volk* had an historic mission, a particular destiny, so that – coupled with the ideas of race and *kampf* – the individual was expected to define themselves, to

understand themselves, as Germans and as having particular duties and obligations; in effect, to replace their own self-identity with the collective identity of the *volk*.

In order to establish, maintain, and expand this collectivism, certain measures were regarded as necessary, as morally correct, with such measures including military conscription, laws designed to criminalize certain activities, both political and personal, and harsh punishment of those contravening such laws.

In addition, the *führerprinzip* was applied to most aspects of life, with individuals expected to accept and obey the authority so established, since such authority was considered to manifest the will, the ethos, of the *volk*. Hence the loyalty individuals gave, as an expression of their recognized duty as Germans, was personal; not to 'the State' nor even to 'the nation', and certainly not to some government, but rather to individuals who were regarded as embodying the will, the identity, of the *volk*. In practice, this meant Adolf Hitler and those appointed by him or by his representatives, and it was this collectivism, this binding of the *volk* by the *führerprinzip*, that Heidegger tried to philosophically express in his now controversial remarks regarding the *Volksgemeinschaft* and by quoting some words attributed to Aeschylus [4].

There are thus six elements that, from the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way, may be said to define the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler. These are: (i) a collective identity and its acceptance; (ii) authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority; (iii) mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority; (iv) the use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth; (v) the use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity; and (vi) the use and acceptance of a particular abstraction - *kampf* - as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

### **Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler**

In purely practical terms, the acceptance and use of the principle of *kampf* together with the acceptance of Hitler as embodying the collective will of the *volk*, inevitably led to the military defeat of NS Germany. For all mortals are fallible and military defeat is always inevitable, given time and even if such a defeat has internal, not external, causes. For tyrants and monarchs die, are overthrown, or are killed; Empires flourish for a while - a few centuries perhaps, at most - and then invariably decline and fade away; oligarchies come and go with monotonous regularity, lasting a decade or perhaps somewhat longer; rebellions and revolutions will break out, given sufficient time, and will often succeed given even more time - decades, centuries - and even following repeated and brutal repression.

Thus, philosophically, the general error here by Hitler and his followers was the obvious one of ὑβρις. A lack of understanding, an unknowing, of the natural

balance - of *δίκη* - as well as a lack of empathy, manifest as this unknowing, this lack, was in the arrogant belief of a personal and a volkish 'destiny' combined with a belief in *kampf* as a natural and necessary expression of human nature. And *ὑβρις φυτεύει τύραννον* - that is, *ὑβρις* plants, is the seed of, the *τύραννον*. Thus, symbolically, we might justifiably say that the *Ἐρινύες* took their revenge, for Hitler and his followers had forgotten, scorned, or never known the wisdom, the truth, that their fallible mortal lives are subject to, guided by, *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* [5]. Thus their fate was destined, a fate that Sophocles expressed so well in respect of Oedipus, *tyrannus*:

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,  
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,  
οὐ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,  
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.  
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν  
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν  
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγεῖνδον παθών. [6]

In effect, therefore, and in general terms, the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler was un-wise; based on a mis-understanding of human nature, and he himself shown, despite his remarkable achievement of gaining power, as lacking a reasoned, a well-balanced, judgement [*σωφρονεῖν*] - since such a balanced judgement would, as Aeschylus explained in the *Oresteia*, reveal that *πόλεμος* [7] always accompanies *ὑβρις* and that only by acceptance of the numinous authority of *πάθει μάθος* (the new law presented to mortals by immortal Zeus) could the tragic cycle of *ἔρις* be ended.

### **A Numinous View of The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler**

Let us now consider the six points enumerated above, in respect of the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way.

As mentioned in my essay *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*:

"The essence of the numinous view - of the ethical way posited by the Philosophy of The Numen - is empathy and thus the acausal (the affective and effecting) connexion we, as individuals, are to all life, sentient and otherwise, with empathy being the foundation of our conscious humanity.

The practical criteria which empathy implies is essentially two-fold: the criteria of the cessation of suffering, and the criteria of the individual, personal, judgement in the immediacy of the moment. For the Philosophy of The Numen, these two criteria manifest the natural character of rational, conscious, empathic, human beings and thus express the nature of our humanity and of human culture, and which nature is manifest in a practical way in compassion and in personal



honour.

Hence these two criteria are used, by The Numinous Way – by the Philosophy of The Numen – to judge our actions, our personal behaviour, and also all the abstractions we manufacture or may manufacture and which thus affect us, as individuals."

(i) A collective identity and its acceptance.

Empathy, as a natural if still under-used and under-developed human faculty, is only and ever individual and of the immediacy of the living moment. [8] It is always personal, individual, and cannot be abstracted out from an individual living being – that is, it cannot have any causal ideation or be represented by or expressed by someone else.

There is the personal, individual, freedom that the knowing that empathy uniquely presents to the individual, and therefore no need of, no sense of, belonging to other than one's immediate surroundings, and no sense of identity beyond the personally known, for all human beings encountered are encountered and empathically known as they uniquely are: as individuals with their own lives, feelings, hopes, and with their own potential and their own past.

Which in essence means The Numinous Way is the way of individuals, and an individual manner of living to be accepted or rejected according to the individual. Thus such a collective identity – and a desire for and acceptance of such an identity – is contrary to this very individual numinous way.

What matters for The Numinous Way is the individual; their empathy, their honour; their personal judgement. What does not matter are supra-personal manufactured abstractions such as a 'nation'. Consequently, the empathic, honourable, individual only has a duty to themselves, to their immediate kin, and to those personally given a pledge of loyalty: not a duty or obligations to some manufactured collective identity however such identity be expressed.

(ii) Authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority.

As I wrote in *Authority and Legitimacy in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*:

" For The Numinous Way, it is the exercise of the judgement of the individual – arising from the use of empathy and the guidance that is personal honour – that is paramount, and which expresses our human nature.

That is, it is honour, the understanding that empathy provides, and the judgement of the individual, that are legitimate, moral, numinous, and thence the basis for authority. This means that authority resides in and extends only to individuals – by virtue of their honour, their

empathy, and manifest in their own personal judgement, and therefore this always personal individual authority cannot be abstracted out from such personal judgement of individuals. In practical terms, this is a new type of authority – that of the individual whose concern is not power over others but over themselves, and which type of power is manifest in a living by honour, and thence in their self-responsibility and in how they interact with others."

Thus, such non-individual authority, acceptance of and obedience to such authority, is contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iii) Mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority.

Given that, for The Numinous Way, authority and justice are individual and manifest in individual judgement and through personal honour, such mandatory punishment by some abstract authority is quite contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iv) The use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth.

According to both empathy and honour, such a judgement of others, such prejudice, on the basis of some abstraction such as perceived race or 'nationality' is immoral [9]. The only moral, honourable, criteria is to judge *individuals* as individuals, sans all abstractions, on the basis of a personal knowing of them extending over a duration of causal Time. To judge *en masse*, without such a direct, personal, extended, personal knowing of each and every individual is reprehensible.

In addition, it is immoral – unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable – to treat people on the basis of their assumed or alleged race or nationality. Thus, the enforced herding of people into 'concentration camps' on the basis of alleged, assumed, race or nationality is quite unjustifiable, inhuman.

(v) The use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity.

Such abstractions included 'blood' and nationality, so that identity became a matter of individuals being classified – by themselves, others, and by the State – according to certain chosen abstract criteria based on 'race' and heritage. Thus there were distinct notions, distinct levels, of separateness.

Empathy, however, presents us with an acausal-knowing of life, human and otherwise, and this knowing is of ourselves as but one fallible, biologically fragile, mortal, microcosmic nexion, and thus of how our self, our perceived and singular separate self-identity, is appearance and not an expression of the true nature of our being [10], which nature is one of connexions, between living emanations, not one of separations.

Such a revealing of our nature reveals that we should act with empathy and honour in the knowledge that our actions affect others or can affect others, directly, indirectly, emotionally, and acausally. That their joy, their pain, their suffering, their fate is ours by virtue of us as a connexion to them – as a connexion to all life; as one emanation of *ψυχή* [11].

What abstractions do is that they conceal our true empathic, compassionate, honourable nature and, ultimately, sever the connexion we are to *ψυχή*, to The Numen.

As mentioned in *On The Nature of Abstractions*:

" The error of abstractionism – of using existing abstractions and manufacturing other abstractions and using these as the source of ethics, of judgement, and so ascribing a value to them – is the error of *ὑβρις* (hubris). That is, the error of unbalance: of neglecting or being unaware of empathy, and of neglecting or being unaware of or profaning the numinous. In the personal and social sense, *ὑβρις* is revealed in a lack of compassion, a lack of balanced reasoning, and not only ascribing to one's self (or some other abstraction, such as a nation-State) what is assumed to be the perfection of right and of good (or the best current approximation of it) but also acting on that presumption to the detriment, the harm, of others.

This is unethical – as all abstractions are inherently unethical – because what is ethical is determined by empathy, and thus cannot be abstracted out of that direct, immediate, and personal knowing which presences empathy in us, as human beings."

(vi) The use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – *kampf* – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

As mentioned previously, in the *Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler* section, *kampf* as principle, as abstraction, is a manifestation of the error of *ὑβρις* and of a lack of empathy.

For empathy, and the cultivation of *σωφρονεῖν*, incline us toward – or should incline us, as individuals, toward – a letting-be; to wu-wei; to a living in the immediacy-of-the-moment. To being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being.

In addition:

"In The Numinous Way, a distinction is made between war and *combat* in that combat refers to *gewin* – similar to the old Germanic *werra*, as distinct from the modern *krieg*. That is, combat refers to a more personal armed quarrel between much smaller factions (and often

between just two adversaries – as in single combat, and trial by combat) when there is, among those fighting, some personal matter at stake or some personal interest involved, with most if not all of those fighting doing so under the leadership of someone they personally know and respect and with the quarrel usually occurring in the locality or localities where the combatants live.

Thus, war is contrary to The Numinous Way – to the Cosmic Ethic – not only because of the impersonal suffering it causes, but also because it is inseparably bound up with individuals having to relinquish their own judgement, with them pursuing some lifeless un-numinous abstraction by violent means, and with the development of supra-personal abstract and thus un-numinous notions of 'justice' and law.

Hence, there is, for The Numinous Way, no such thing as a 'just war' – for war is inherently unjust and un-numinous. What is just and lawful are honourable individuals and their actions, and such combat as such individuals may honourably and personally undertake, and such violence as they may honourably and of necessity employ in pursuit of being fair and ensuring fairness." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

## **Conclusion**

It should thus be quite clear why The Numinous Way is contrary to and incompatible with the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler that was manifest in National-Socialist Germany.

January 2012  
Revised JD2455956.107

---

## *Notes*

[1] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen* and also *The Natural Balance of Honour – Honour, Empathy, and Compassion in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*, from which this is a quote:

"As used and defined by The Numinous Way, empathy – *ἐμπάθεια* – is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by The Numinous Way, it is a specific and extended type of *συμπάθεια*. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings – and thus differs in nature from compassion."

[2] See: (i) *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*; (ii) *Some Notes Concerning Causality, Ethics, and Acausal Knowing*; (iii) *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality*.

[3] qv. *The Natural Balance of Honour*.

[4] In his 1933 speech at the University of Freiburg, where he quoted the following verse (v.514) from *Prometheus Bound* [my translation] –

τέχνη δ' ἀνάγκης ἀσθενεστέρα μακρῶ.

How so very feeble Craft is before Compulsion!

[5]

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.  
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?  
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

*Aeschylus* (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6 [My translation]

[6]

You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus,  
He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:  
What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?  
But what a tide of problems have come over him!  
Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals,  
To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until,  
Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.

*Oedipus Tyrannus*, vv. 1524-1530 [My translation]

[7] In respect of πόλεμος see my *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic* where I suggest that as used by Heraclitus it implies neither Kampf nor conflict, but rather – as a quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests – what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being. πόλεμος is thus that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, and also that which manifests as δίκη and accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being (become bound together – be whole – again) by enantiodromia.

[8] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*

[9] See *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race* and also *On The Nature of Abstractions*.

[10] Refer for example to *Acausality*, *Phainómenon*, and *The Appearance of Causality* and also *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*.

[11] Correctly understood – and as evident by the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, et al – *ψυχή* implies Life *qua* being.

---

### **Suffering And The Human Culture Of Pathei-Mathos**

Extract From A Letter To A Personal Correspondent

In respect of the question whether I am optimistic about our future as a species, I vacillate between optimism and pessimism, knowing as I – and so many – do from experience that the world contains people who do good things [1], people who do bad things, and people who when influenced or led or swayed by some-thing or someone can veer either way; and given that it seems as if in each generation there are those – many – who have not learned or who cannot learn from the pathei-mathos of previous generations, from our collective human πάθει μάθος that has brought-into-being a culture of pathei-mathos thousands of years old. Historically – prior to, during, after the time of Cicero, and over a thousand years later during and after the European Renaissance – this culture was evident in Studia Humanitatis, and is now presenced in works inspired by or recollecting personal pathei-mathos and described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; in particular works of literature, poetry, and drama; in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and by art-forms such as films and documentaries.

This culture of pathei-mathos reveals to us the beauty, the numinosity, of personal love; the numinosity of humility, and compassion; and the tragic lamentable unnecessary suffering caused by hubris, dishonour, selfishness, inconsiderance, intolerance, prejudice, hatred, war, extremism, and ideologies [2]. A world-wide suffering so evident, today, for example in the treatment of and the violence (by men) toward women; in the continuing armed conflicts – regional and local, over some-thing – that displace tens of thousands of people and cause destruction, injury, and hundreds of thousands of deaths; and evident also in the killing of innocent people [3] by those who adhere to a harsh interpretation of some religion or some political ideology.

Do good people, world-wide, outweigh bad ones? My experiences and travels incline me to believe they may do, although it seems as if the damage the bad ones do, the suffering they cause, sometimes and for a while outweighs the good that others do. But does the good done, in societies world-wide, now outweigh the bad done, especially such large-scale suffering as is caused by

despots, corruption, armed conflict, and repressive regimes? Probably, at least in some societies. And yet even in such societies where, for example, education is widespread, there always seem to be selfish, dishonourable, inconsiderate, people; and also people such as the extremist I was with my hubriatic certitude-of-knowing inciting or causing hatred and violence and intolerance and glorifying war and kampf and trying to justify killing in the name of some abstraction or some belief or some cause or some ideology. People mostly, it seems, immune to and/or intolerant of the learning of the culture of pathei-mathos; a learning available to us in literature, music, Art, memoirs, in the aural and written recollections of those who endured or who witnessed hatred, violence, intolerance, conflict, war, and killing, and a learning also available in the spiritual message of those who taught humility, goodness, love, and tolerance. Immune or intolerant people who apparently can only change – or who could only possibly change for the better – only when they themselves are afflicted by such vicissitudes, such personal misfortune and suffering, as is the genesis of their own pathei-mathos.

Thus, and for example, in Europe there is the specific pathei-mathos that the First and the Second World Wars wrought. A collective learning regarding the destruction, the suffering, the brutality, the horror, of wars where wrakeful machines and mass manufactured weapons played a significant role.

All this, while sad, is perhaps the result of our basic human nature; for we are jumelle, and not only because we are "deathful of body yet deathless the inner mortal" [4] but also because it seems to me that what is good and bad resides in us all [5], nascent or alive or as part of our personal past, and that it is just so easy, so tempting, so enjoyable, sometimes, to indulge in, to do, what is bad, and often harder for us to do what is right. Furthermore, we do seem to have a tendency – or perhaps a need – to ascribe what is bad to being 'out there', in something abstract or in others while neglecting or not perceiving our own faults and mistakes and while asserting or believing that we, and those similar to us or who we are in agreement with, are right and thus have the 'correct', the righteous, answers. Thus it is often easier to find what is bad 'out there' rather than within ourselves; easier to hate than to love, especially as a hatred of impersonal others sometimes affords us a reassuring sense of identity and a sense of being 'better' than those others.

Will it therefore require another thousand, or two thousand, or three thousand years – or more or less millennia – before we human beings en masse, world-wide, are empathic, tolerant, kind, and honourable? Is such a basic change in our nature even possible? Certainly there are some – and not only ideologues of one kind or another – who would argue and who have argued that such a change is not desirable. And is such a change in our nature contingent, as I incline to believe, upon the fair allocation of world resources and solving problems such as hunger and poverty and preventing preventable diseases? Furthermore, how can or could or should such a basic change be brought about – through an organized religion or religions, or through individual governments

and their laws and their social and political and economic and educational policies, or through a collocation of governments, world-wide; or through individuals reforming themselves and personally educating others by means of, for example, the common culture of pathei-mathos which all humans share and which all human societies have contributed to for thousands of years?

Which leads us on to questions regarding dogma, faith, and dissent; and to questions regarding government and compulsion and 'crime and punishment' and whether or not 'the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few'; and also to questions regarding the efficacy of the reforming, spiritual, personal way given that spiritual ways teaching love, tolerance, humility, and compassion – and virtuous as they are, and alleviating and preventing suffering as they surely have – have not after several thousand years effected such a change in humans en masse.

I have to admit that I have no definitive or satisfactory answers to all these, and similar, questions; although my own pathei-mathos – and my lamentable four-decade long experience as an extremist, an ideologue, and as a selfish opinionated inconsiderate person – incline me to prefer the reforming, spiritual, personal way since I feel that such an approach, involving as it does a personal study of, a personal transmission of, the culture of pathei-mathos – and a personal knowing and a living of the humility that the culture of pathei-mathos teaches – is a way that does not cause nor contribute to the suffering that still so blights this world. A personal preference for such a numinous way even though I am aware of three things: of my past propensity to be wrong and thus of the necessary fallible nature of my answers; of the limited nature and thus the long time-scale (of many millennia) that such a way implies; and that it is possible, albeit improbable except in Science Fiction, that good people of honourable intentions may some day find a non-suffering-causing way by which governments or society or perhaps some new form of governance may in some manner bring about that change, en masse, in our human nature required to evolve us into individuals of empathy, compassion, and honour, who thus have something akin to a 'prime directive' to guide them in their dealings with those who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves.

Were I to daydream about some future time when such a galactic 'prime directive' exists, directing we spacefaring humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of non-terrans who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, then I would be inclined to speculate that unless we by then have fundamentally and irretrievably changed ourselves for the better then it would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it. For that is what we have done, among ourselves, for thousands of years; making then breaking some treaty or other; making some excuse to plunder resources; having some legal institution change some existing law or make some new law to give us the 'right' to do what it is we want to do; or manufacture some new legislative or governing body in order to 'legalize' what we do or have already



done. Always using a plethora of words – and, latterly, legalese – to persuade others, and often ourselves, that what we do or are about to do or have already done is justified, justifiable, necessary, or right.

Perhaps the future excuse to so interfere contrary to a prime directive would be the familiar one of 'our security'; perhaps it would be an economic one of needing to exploit 'their' resources; perhaps it would be one regarding the threat of 'terrorism'; perhaps it would be the ancient human one, hallowed by so much blood, of 'our' assumed superiority, of 'their system' being 'repressive' or 'undemocratic' or of they – those 'others' – being 'backward' or 'uncivilized' and in need of being enlightened and 're-educated' by our 'progressive' ideas. Or, more probable, it would be some new standard or some new fashionable political or social or even religious dogma by which we commend ourselves on our progress and which we use, consciously or otherwise, to judge others by.

The current reality is that even if we had or soon established a terran 'prime directive' directing we humans not to interfere in the internal affairs of other humans here on Earth who are different, in whatever way, from ourselves, it is fairly certain it "would not be long before some human or some human authority, somewhere, manufactured some sly excuse to order to try and justify ignoring it..."

Which mention of a terran 'prime directive' leads to two of the other questions which cause me to vacillate between optimism and pessimism in regard to our future as a species. The question of increasing population, and the question of the finite resources of this Earth. Which suggests to me, as some others, that – especially as the majority of people now live in urban areas – a noble option is for us, as a species, to cooperate and betake ourselves to colonize our Moon, then Mars, and seek to develop such technology as would take us beyond our Solar System. For if we do not do this then the result would most probably be, at some future time, increasing conflict over land and resources, mass migrations (probably resulting in more conflict) and such governments or authorities as then exist forced by economic circumstance to adopt policies to reduce or limit their own population. Global problems probably exasperated still further by the detrimental changes that available evidence indicates could possibly result from what has been termed 'climate change' [6].

But is the beginning of this noble option of space colonization viable in the near future? Possibly not, given that the few countries that have the resources, the space expertise and the technology necessary – and the means to develop existing space technology – do not consider such exploration and colonization as a priority, existing as they seem to do in a world where nation-States still compete for influence and power and where conflict – armed, deadly, and otherwise – is still regarded as a viable solution to problems.

Which leads we human beings, with our jumelle character, confined to this small planet we call Earth, possibly continuing as we have, for millennia, continued: a

quarrelsome species, often engaged (like primates) in minor territorial disputes; in our majority unempathic; often inconsiderate, often prejudiced (even though we like to believe otherwise); often inclined to place our self-interest and our pleasure first; often prone to being manipulated or to manipulating others; often addicted to the slyness of words spoken and written and heard and read; often believing 'we' are better than 'them'; and fighting, raping, hating, killing, invading here, interfering there. And beset by the problems wrought by increasing population, by dwindling resources, by mass migrations, by continuing armed conflicts (regional, local, supranational, over some-thing) and possibly also affected by the effects of climate change.

Yet also, sometimes despite ourselves, we are beings capable of – and have shown over millennia – compassion, kindness, gentleness, tolerance, love, fairness, reason, and a valourous self-sacrifice that is and has been inspirational. But perhaps above all we have, in our majority, exuded and kept and replenished the virtue of hope; hoping, dreaming, of better times, a better future, sometime, somewhere – and not, as it happens, for ourselves but for our children and their children and the future generations yet to be born. And it is this hope that changes us, and has changed us, for the better, as our human culture of pathei-mathos so eloquently, so numinously, and so tragically, reveals.

Thus the question seems to be whether we still have hope enough, dreams enough, nobility enough, and can find some way to change ourselves, to thus bring a better – a more fairer, more just, more compassionate – future into-being without causing or contributing to the suffering which so blights, and which has so blighted, our existence on Earth.

Personally, I am inclined to wonder if the way we need – the hope, the dream, we need – is that of setting forth to explore and colonize our Moon, then Mars, and then the worlds beyond our Solar System, guided by a prime directive.

2013

Revised 2017

### *Notes*

[1] I understand 'the good' as what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. Honour being here, and elsewhere in my recent writings, understood as the instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

[2] I have expanded, a little, on what I mean by 'the culture of pathei-mathos' in my tract *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*.

[3] As defined by my 'philosophy of pathei-mathos', I understand innocence as "an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this

presumption of innocence of others – until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise – is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do. Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.”

[4] Pœmandres (Corpus Hermeticum), 15 – διὰ τοῦτο παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶα διπλοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος

As I noted in my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tract,

"Jumelle. For διπλοῦς. The much underused and descriptive English word jumelle – from the Latin gemellus – describes some-thing made in, or composed of, two parts, and is therefore most suitable here, more so than common words such as 'double' or twofold."

[5] qv. Sophocles, Antigone, v.334, vv.365-366

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἄνθρωπου δεινότερον πέλει...  
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being...  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts – he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[6] Many people have a view about 'climate change' – for or against – for a variety of reasons. My own view is that the scientific evidence available at the moment seems to indicate that there is a change resulting from human activity and that this change could possibly be detrimental, in certain ways, to us and to the other life with which we share this planet. The expressions 'seems to indicate' and 'could possibly be' are necessary given that this view of mine might need to be, and should be, reassessed if and when new evidence or facts become available.

---

## Persecution And War

### A Remembering

Reared as a Roman Catholic, educated for a while at a Catholic preparatory school and then – again for a while – at a Catholic boarding school, I remember

the history taught by our teachers and Priests of the centuries-long persecution of English and Irish Catholics that began in the 16th century. There were stories of martyrs; of recusants; of secret Masses; of anti-Catholic polemics and propaganda; and of the monks who - after the suppression of the monasteries, the theft of monastic lands and wealth, begun by a tyrannos named Henry - escaped to France and founded monasteries such as the one at Dieulouard in Lorraine.

There thus was engendered in we Catholic children a feeling of difference, aided by the fact that our Mass was in Latin, by our sacrament of confession, by the practice of Gregorian chant, and by the singing of hymns such as Faith Of Our Fathers with its memorable verses

Faith of our Fathers living still  
In spite of dungeon, fire, and sword [...]  
We will be true to thee till death [...]

Our Fathers, chained in prisons dark,  
Were still in heart and conscience free [...]  
Faith of our Fathers, Mary's prayers  
Shall win our country back to thee

This feeling of difference was forcefully remembered when I in the early 1970's - during The Troubles - ventured to visit Northern Ireland; when I in the mid-1970's and as a Catholic monk spent several weeks staying at a Presbytery in Dublin; and when I in the mid-1990's - before the Good Friday Agreement - visited Derry.

Forcefully remembered because I listened to accounts of the burning of Catholic homes by Protestant mobs in 1969 and the subsequent flight of hundreds of Catholic families to the Irish Republic where they were housed in refugee camps; listened to witness accounts of the killing of eleven Catholics, including a Priest, by the British Army in Ballymurphy in 1971; listened to witness accounts of the killing of fourteen Catholics, again by the British Army, in Derry in 1972; and listened to stories of the persecution of Irish Catholics under British rule.

Such a remembering, such a childhood feeling of difference, formed part of the years-long personal and philosophical reflexion that occupied me for several years as I, between 2006 and 2009, developed my 'numinous way' and then between 2011 and 2012 gradually refined it into the 'way of pathei-mathos', with the core of that reflexion concerning matters such as extremism, my own extremist past, war, prejudice, intolerance, and persecution.

## **War And Combat**

Familiar as I was with ancient works by Thucydides, Herodotus, Livy, and others; with many works concerning more recent European history by modern

historians, as well as with personal accounts of those who had fought for both the Allies and the Axis during World War Two, I recalled some words of Cicero:

"Aliis ego te virtutibus, continentiae, gravitatis, iustitiae, fidei, ceteris omnibus."

"because of your other virtues of self-restraint, of dignity, of fairness, of honesty, and all other such qualities..." [1]

Which led me to consider making a distinction between war and a more personal combat, between a modern *krieg* and the Old Germanic *werra*, given that war, from my reading of and admittedly fallible understanding of history, seemed to me to involve – by its very nature of necessitating killing and causing injury – intolerance, hatred, a divisive sense of difference often involving "us" believing we were "better" (or more civilized) than them, our enemies, thus leading to a dehumanization of "the enemy". A divisive sense of difference and a dehumanization often aided (particularly in modern times) by polemics, rumour, and propaganda; and a divisive sense of difference, a dehumanization, together with polemics, rumour, and propaganda, which I knew from my own decades of political and religious activism formed a core part of all types of extremism.

The distinction I considered was that personal combat unlike war did not involve large armies fighting against each other because of some diktat or personal agenda by some tyrannos or because of some ideology or religion or policy of some State or government. Instead, combat involved small groups – such as clans or tribes or neighbours – fighting because of some personal quarrel or some wrong or some perceived grievance.

But the more I considered this supposed distinction between combat and war the more I realized that in practice there was no such distinction since both involved principles similar to those of the Ancient Roman *Leges Regiae* – qv. the *Jus Papirianum* attributed to Sextus Papirius – where someone or some many possess or have acquired (through for example force of arms) or have assumed authority over others, and who by the use of violence and/or by the threat of punishment and/or by oratory or propaganda, are able to force or persuade others to accept such authority and obey the commands of such authority.

This acceptance by individuals of a supra-personal authority – or, more often, the demand by some supra-personal authority that individuals accept such a supra-personal authority – was manifest in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), such as his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, "Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio."

Which hierarchy and acceptance of authority led Augustine to describe – in book XXII of *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* – the concept that war requires the authority of a person (such as a monarch) who has such "necessary" authority over others. This concept regarding war has remained a guiding principle of modern Western nations where the authority to inaugurate and prosecute a war against perceived enemies resides in the State, and thus in modern potentates who have seized power or in elected governments and their representatives such as Presidents and Prime Ministers.

### **Authority And Society**

In the nations of the West, such a hierarchy of authority applies not only to war and its prosecution but also to changes, to reform, in society [2] for there is, as I mentioned in *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*,

"a hierarchy of judgement involved, whatever political 'flavour' the government is assigned to, is assumed to represent, or claims it represents; with this hierarchy of necessity requiring the individual in society to either (i) relinquish their own judgement, being accepting of or acquiescing in (from whatever reason or motive such as desire to avoid punishment) the judgement of these others, or (ii) to oppose this 'judgement of others' either actively through some group, association, or movement (political, social, religious) or individually, with there being the possibility that some so opposing this 'judgement of others' may resort to using violent means against the established order." [3]

In the way of pathei-mathos authority is personal, based on individual empathy and a personal pathei-mathos; both of which have a local horizon so that what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [4]

In practical terms this means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to

persecute those that they and others have declared are "our" enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies.

Thus in the case of my Catholic remembering, those soldiers in Ballymurphy and in Derry shot and killed civilians, women included, because those soldiers believed them to be "enemies", because propaganda had dehumanized those enemies; because those soldiers were part of and obeyed a hierarchical, supra-personal, chain-of-command by being there armed and prepared to use deadly force and violence against individuals they did not personally know; and because in the aftermath of those killings, and for years afterwards, they were not honest and hence did not contradict the propaganda stories, the lies, about those events which some of their superiors and others circulated in an attempt to justify such acts of inhumanity.

Yet for me the real tragedy is that events similar to those of my very personal remembering have occurred on a vaster scale millennia after millennia and are still occurring, again on a vaster scale and world-wide, despite us having access to the wisdom of the past, manifest as such wisdom is, for those reared in the West, in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus, in the Oedipus Tyrannus of Sophocles, in the mythos of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμερές τ' Ἐρινύες [5], in many of the writings of Cicero, in Τὰ εἰς ἑαυτὸν by Marcus Aurelius, in the numinous beauty of Gregorian chant, in the music of JS Bach, and in so many, many, other writers and artists ancient and modern.

Da sceolde se hearpere weorðan swa sariġ  
þæt he ne meahte ongemong oðrum mannum bion  
(XXXV, 6)

9.ix.18

ooo

[1] M. Tullius Cicero, *Pro Murena Oratio*, 23. My translation.

[2] By 'society' in the context of this essay and the way of pathei-mathos is meant a collection of individuals who dwell, who live, in a particular area and who are subject to the same laws and the same institutions of authority. Modern society is thus a manifestation of some State, and States are predicated on individuals actively or passively accepting some supra-personal authority, be it governmental (national) or regional (county), or more usually both.

[3] "Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos". *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Fifth edition. Link: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

[4] "Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions." 2015. Link:

<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2015/03/11/personal-reflexions-on-some-metaphysical-questions/>

[5] "Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies." Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 516

---

### **The Matter With Death**

The matter with death is that the flow of Life goes on, and we are just gone; simply gone from one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy among a universe of galaxies.

No trains in the distant valley would stop...  
Only the cold day in Winter  
Might change  
Just a little  
When the sun shines into blue  
And white wisps of cirrus  
Gather to briefly signal the change

We just do not matter as much as we sometimes - often - believe or would like to believe, and all that we can hope for, perhaps, is that someone or some many may remember us, or that some compassionate deed of ours, some Presencing of The Numinous we had the fortune to presence in our life, may aid or help or have helped or aided some others in some way to live as we in the moments of our dying perhaps felt, remembered, we should have: born along by such nobility of personal love gently shared as made us reach out to where all our hopes and every Paradise, past-present-future, were born bringing such comfort and such beauty, such a wordless sense of goodness, that we in such moments became as happy children, again; there where no conflict touched us, no doubts assailed us, no hunger drained us, and no threats came to threaten or restrain.

There was only the warming Sun as that morning when two new lovers, newly-born, betook themselves out to where a white sandy beach met with sea and where they swam swam together until tiredness came to bring them back to shore: no world beyond their world, there. Footprints soon washed away, by waveful sea.

So Life as Nature so presenced, here, will flow on: past our passing. To smooth out with durations of centuries our mistakes, our worries, doubts and fears, and such interference as perhaps so kept us once suffused with a passion and



sometimes manipulation and lies, born from bloated self-importance and the delusive ideation of individual Change.

For there is no destiny that comes to shake, mould, preen and make us: only the flow that carries us while we with our illusion of self so lasts. All we are, are moments, passing: as the falling leaf of Autumn falls, having lost its Springful green, no one there to blame.

We just do not matter as we hope, believe, or would like to believe, we do: for there is no you or I or we to hold us here. Only one Life, presenced, here and growing, flowing - one Earth turning where one Sun lights one small part of our greater cosmic dark.

August 2011

---

## **Appendix I**

### **Physis And Being An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos**

The philosophy of pathei-mathos is based on four axioms: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

For, as mentioned in a previous essay,

"empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presenced in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which

recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and *pathei-mathos* reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and *pathei-mathos* lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist *weltanschauungen*, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria - deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy - but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms *The State* and *The Nation-State* [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions - ancient and modern - usurp our connexion to Being

and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and *pathei-mathos* as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and *pathei-mathos*, however, wordlessly – sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites – uncover physis: our physis, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which physis, howsoever presented – in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being – is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the acausal) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a *meson* – μέσον [9] – with the potentiality to change, to develop) and thus which (i) is not – as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam – a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of physis) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion – our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings – also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of *pathei-mathos*. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presented in us but as capable of changing – unfolding, evolving – in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presented by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic *θεός* (god) and *θεοί* (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of living beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being – the cosmic order, the κόσμος – itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presenced in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning – nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κἀγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κἀγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how the philosophy of pathei-mathos might, in one way, be presenced in a practical manner in the world.

2019

ooo

## Notes

[1] I use the term physis – φύσις – ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (persona) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the Poemandres tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I use the term denotatum – from the Latin denotare – not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* the term abstraction signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of denotatum, in *Kratylus* 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) – βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write The State instead of "the state" because I consider The State/The Nation-State a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written The State (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of *physis*) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the *physis* of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something – as for example Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος – but instead the *physis* of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὅλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – *physis* denotes the quidditas of beings having changeament inherent within them; for *substantia* has been denoted by *physis* because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changeaments predicated on it. For *physis* is inherent changeament either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of "what is real" - τῶν ὄντων - cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

φημὶ ἐγὼ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ  
γινῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use the term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean "having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence."

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive - as a changement - was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity - the chief of the gods - capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presenced and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern - such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath - but also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the

culture of pathei-mathos."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, Corpus Hermeticum.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

---

## Appendix II

### Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing

There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at

all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness.

For what I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via *pathei-mathos*, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certainty-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice.

Thus, instead of a natural and a human concern with what is local, personal and personally known, extremism breeds a desire to harshly interfere in the lives of others - personally unknown and personally distant - on the basis of such a hubriatic certainty-of-knowing that strife and suffering are inevitable. For there is in all extremists that stark lack of personal humility, that unbalance, that occurs when - as in all extremisms - what is masculine is emphasized and idealized and glorified to the detriment (internal, and external) of what is muliebral, and thus when some ideology or some dogma or some faith or some cause is given precedence over love and when loyalty to some manufactured abstraction is given precedence over loyalty to family, loved ones, friends.

For I have sensed that there are only changeable individual ways and individual fallible answers, born again and again via *pathei-mathos* and whose subtle scent - the wisdom - words can neither capture nor describe, even though we try and perhaps need to try, and try perhaps (as for me) as one hopeful needful act of a non-religious redemption.

Thus, and for instance, I sense - only sense - that peace (or the beginning thereof) might possibly just be not only the freedom from subsuming personal



desires but also the freedom from striving for some supra-personal, abstract, impersonal, goal or goals. That is, a just-being, a flowing and a being-flowed. No subsuming concern with what-might-be or what-was. No lust for ideations; no quest for the violation of difference. Instead - a calmful waiting; just a listening, a seeing, a feeling, of what-is as those, as our, emanations of Life flow and change as they naturally flow and change, in, with, and beyond us: human, animal, of sea, soil, sky, Cosmos, and of Nature... But I am only dreaming, here in pathei-mathos-empathy-land where there is no past-present-future passing each of us with our future-past: only the numen presenced in each one of our so individual timeless human stories.

Yet, in that - this - other world, the scent of having understood remains, which is why I feel I now quite understand why, in the past, certain individuals disliked - even hated - me, given my decades of extremism: my advocacy of racism, fascism, holocaust denial, and National-Socialism, followed (after my conversion to Islam) by my support of bin Laden, the Taliban, and advocacy of 'suicide attacks'.

I also understand why - given my subversive agenda and my amoral willingness to use any tactic, from Occult honeytraps to terrorism, to undermine the society of the time as prelude to revolution - certain people have sought to discredit me by distributing and publishing certain allegations.

Furthermore, given my somewhat Promethean peregrinations - which included being a Catholic monk, a vagabond, a fanatical violent neo-nazi, a theoretician of terror, running a gang of thieves, studying Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism; being a nurse, a farm worker, and supporter of Jihad - I expect many or most of those interested in or curious about my 'numinous way' and my recent mystical writings to be naturally suspicious of or doubtful about my reformation and my rejection of extremism.

Thus I harbour no resentment against individuals, or organizations, or groups, who over the past forty or so years have publicly and/or privately made negative or derogatory comments about me or published items making claims about me. Indeed, I now find myself in the rather curious situation of not only agreeing with some of my former political opponents on many matters, but also (perhaps) of understanding (and empathizing with) their motivation; a situation which led and which leads me to appreciate even more just how lamentable my extremism was and just how arrogant, selfish, wrong, and reprehensible, I as a person was, and how in many ways many of those former opponents were and are (*ex concessio*) better people than I ever was or am.

Which is one reason why I have written what I have recently written about extremism and my extremist past: so that perchance someone or some many may understand extremism, and its causes, better and thus be able to avoid the mistakes I made, avoid causing the suffering I caused; or be able to in some way

more effectively counter or prevent such extremism in the future. And one reason - only one - why I henceforward must live in seclusion and *in silencio*.

May 2012

In Loving Memory of Frances, died 29<sup>th</sup> May 2006

In Loving Memory of Sue, died 4<sup>th</sup> April 1993

---

### **Appendix III**

#### **A Matter of Honour**

Given the persistence of unsubstantiated rumours and allegations regarding involvement with Occultism, I deemed it necessary to publicly comment, in some detail, about the matter and thus provide 'my side of the story' to compliment my autobiography *Myngath*.

However, as I note here in the conclusion, even though the matter is one of honour I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations to suddenly cease as a result of such comments by me, although I perhaps naively nurture a vague hope that what I write here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

March 5th, 2012

(Revised December 2012)

#### **Journalists, Allegations, and Propaganda**

For many years - in fact up to and including the present - rumours and allegations concerning my involvement with practical occultism and satanism have been in circulation, and regularly referred to and repeated by journalists, and others, in newspapers, magazines, articles and, latterly, on that new medium - greatly susceptible to the spreading of dishonourable allegations and rumours - that has been termed the Internet. One of these allegations is that I am a certain person known as Anton Long.

In the past thirty-seven years only four people, on hearing or learning about such rumours and allegations, have had the decency to ask me, in person, "for my side of the story". The first was Colin Jordan, the second was John Tyndall,

the third was Steve Sargent, and the fourth was a Muslim whom I came to greatly admire and to whom I gave a personal pledge of loyalty.

I have, when asked in person, or via impersonal means of communication such as letters, always denied such allegations of such involvement, as I have, on numerous occasions, challenged anyone to provide evidence to support such accusations. No such evidence has ever been forthcoming <sup>[1]</sup>.

For instance, I was for several days, in early 2000, covertly filmed, photographed, and followed by an investigative team working for the BBC as part of their research for a Panorama programme about David Copeland and the London nail-bombings <sup>[2]</sup>. Prior to that surveillance, and for an ever longer period, I was also the subject of covert surveillance by a private investigator hired to undertake preliminary research for that BBC investigation. What did all this covert surveillance and investigation reveal? A satanist? No. Someone living an ordinary, rather boring, life with his wife and family in a small village near Malvern who went to work everyday on a bicycle to a nearby farm.

In addition, since at least 1997 I have no doubt been under regular covert surveillance by Special Branch and MI5 – and especially so since 9/11 given some statements I made while a Muslim – with all my communications (internet, telephonic) monitored via GCHQ. Indeed, following my conversion to Islam and during the time I seemed to be, for the security services and the Police, 'a significant person of interest', I recall many meetings and friendly conversations with one of the Special Branch officers on attachment to the city near where I was then living.

Given such surveillance and interest, no doubt there are records somewhere of my activities as a neo-nazi extremist; of my subsequent life as a radical Muslim supporting Jihad, and finally of my life as a reclusive philosopher, a friend of σοφόν who seeks, through λόγος, to uncover – to understand – Being and beings, and who thus suggests or proposes an ontology of Being. What there will not be, will be any records of 'Myatt as Satanist'.

As I mentioned in my article *Polemos Our Genesis* in respect of such surveillance:

"I have [since at least 1997] worked on the assumption that my communications are monitored, so I have restricted my internet and telephonic communications to friends, family, and to people I personally know or who are personally known to someone I trust. This means two things. That all I communicate is personal, open, transparent, and honest; and that if someone not belonging to this small circle of contacts claims to have had some communication from me – either sent with my name or sent using some pseudonym – then it is bogus."

In respect of rumours and allegations, I have, on a few occasions, challenged

some individuals to a duel with deadly weapons, according to the etiquette of duelling. Not one of the individuals so challenged to a duel had the honour to accept, or issue a public apology in lieu of fighting such a duel.

As I wrote some thirteen or more years ago:

" I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated."

Such challenges, the lack of evidence to support the allegations and rumours, and the refusal of those so challenged to a duel of honour to either fight that duel of honour or issue an apology, reveals the truth of this particular matter - at least to those possessed of *arête*.

However, I quite understand why many people - journalists included - did in the past (and possibly still do) impersonally dislike or hate me, given my past and unethical support for, and my past propagation of neo-nazism, and my previous lamentable public incitement of hatred, intolerance, and violence. I was only reaping what I had sown. Thus I believe I also understand the motivation of those journalists and those authors who used rumours and allegations of involvement with Satanism to discredit me, for they were most probably only doing what they thought was necessary in the struggle against racism, extremism, and bigotry. But does that struggle - for what is ethical - justify their (in my view) unethical use of rumours and unproven allegations?

My own rather old-fashioned view is and was that a personal knowing of someone, extending over a period of many months if not a year or more, is the only honourable way to form a reasoned opinion about someone. For honour means the cultivation of traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and one of which virtues is that we strive to treat other human beings in a fair way; ignoring what others have said or written about them; ignoring their past (real or alleged); and giving them the benefit of the doubt unless and until direct personal experience, direct knowledge of them, reveals them to be dishonourable.

Instead of penning material based on such a personal knowing, it occurs to me that some journalists who wrote and published stories about me might knowingly or unknowingly have or had a somewhat prejudiced view, having put some political or personal agenda before veracity, and thence use their position and/or their influence (use the power of the Media) to propagate their opinion, their version of events, and belittle or otherwise denigrate persons they disliked

or did not approve of because they viewed that person not in an empathic, non-judgemental way - as an individual human being whom they had taken the trouble to get to know - but in an impersonal abstract way according to some label or category they had assigned to that individual because of the alleged political or religious views of that individual. Thus, in my own case, they prejudged me - categorized me - as a 'fascist' or a 'nazi' or a 'satanist' - and since they disliked or hated fascists and nazis and considered satanists were immoral and 'evil', they adjudged me a reprehensible person whom they did not like.

Furthermore, in place of a personal knowing - and/or a scholarly research into the life and times of the person they intend to write about and lasting many months if not a year or more - they rely on certain journalistic practices in order to gather information. Practices such as: (1) bribing or persuading corrupt Police officers and government officials and others in order to obtain confidential information about individuals; (2) hacking/intercepting people's private telephonic/internet communications; (3) hiring private investigators to follow individuals and gather information about them; (4) hypocritically attempting to excuse such unethical conduct by making the spurious claim that what they write or say is 'in the public interest' when not only is this so-called 'public interest' an unethical abstraction but also when they as individuals would be offended if someone used such hack journalistic practices against them and their own family. Thus, and for example, a well-known anti-fascist organization could unethically obtain confidential information about its opponents by getting someone sympathetic to their cause in the civil service to obtain national insurance numbers, dates of birth, places of residence, and employment history; as they could employ the services of an unethical private investigator to obtain that and other information via corrupt officials and by covert surveillance.

The result of such journalistic practices, of such a lack of personal knowing, of such a lack of scholarly research, and of such prejudgement of a person, is a hasty piece of work that - to paraphrase what a friend of mine once wrote - possibly says more about the journalist, more about our society, and more about the modern Media, than it does about the person who is the subject of such a piece of work.

In addition, and importantly, are those who in the past have prejudged me - who have written about me as a violent extremist - accepting of individual change, of the virtues of reformation and pardonance? Are they aware of my voluminous recent writings regarding my philosophy of pathei-mathos and those regarding my extremist past and my rejection of extremism? <sup>[3]</sup> Are they open to the possibility of my change and reformation? Or will they continue with 'the party line' and thus continue to insist that I am some sinister person whose recent mystical writings are just some sort of diabolical ploy?

More interestingly (perhaps) could my career as an extremist have been

brought to an earlier end had one or some of my opponents taken the trouble to get to know me personally and rationally revealed to me the error of my suffering-causing, unethical, extremist ways? Perhaps; perhaps not - I admit I do not know. I do know, however, how my personal interaction with, and the ethical behaviour of, the Police I interacted with from the time of my arrest by officers from SO12 in 1998, permanently changed (for the better) my attitude toward the Police.

### **The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study**

In a Master of Arts thesis entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles* a post-graduate student named Senholt made certain claims, and drew certain conclusions, in respect of myself and alleged involvement with the Occult group the 'order of nine angles'. One of his claims is that "the role of David Myatt is paramount to the whole creation and existence of the ONA."

Given that this thesis <sup>[4]</sup> is often cited as having 'proved' my involvement, I believe a brief overview of the claims, and proofs offered, seems to be in order, especially as - to my knowledge - it has not so far been subjected to a critical analysis.

A reading of the thesis reveals two interesting things. First, the use of and reliance upon secondary and tertiary sources, many of which are anonymous and many of which are derived from 'the world wide web', that most unreliable source of information. For example, he relies on the book *Black Sun* by Goodrick-Clarke even after admitting it contains errors and that the author offers no proof for the assumptions made in respect of me and the ONA <sup>[5]</sup>.

Second, that Senholt, undoubtedly inadvertently, commits the logical fallacy of incomplete evidence <sup>[6]</sup>. That is, the multitude of facts and circumstances which do not support his contention about me and the ONA are omitted.

Thus, and in my view, the Senholt thesis, while interesting, does not meet the requirement, the criteria, of scholarship.

This criteria is essentially two-fold: (i) of detailed, meticulous, unbiased research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a period of some considerable time, usually a year or more in duration, and of necessity involving primary source material; and (ii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject therefore being not only the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired but also possessing a certain gravitas, just like genuine scholars.

His lack of primary research is evident in several factual errors. A few examples:

(1) He repeats Searchlight's claim that their 'expose' of me in the April 1998 issue of their magazine caused internal strife in the National Socialist groups I was then involved with, whereas it had no effect at all, other than to make people laugh, since few if anyone of the extremists in such groups ever took seriously anything stated in *Searchlight*. Instead, as their name for it indicated - *Searchlies* - they regarded it as "just more Jewish propaganda" and indeed as something of a badge of honour to be mentioned in it, with the general feeling being that 'if you get mentioned in *Searchlies* you must be doing something right!'

(2) He asserts that in 1998 the Police raided my home and arrested me. Which is correct. He then asserts that I was arrested again two years later, after the London nailbomb attacks, together with some other Combat 18 members. Which is incorrect. The facts being that I was not arrested in 2000, and that the 1998 raids were the ones that also involved some C18 and NSM members.

(3) He writes that: "His conversion did not escape the mainstream media, and most English newspapers and media-outlets wrote about the incident, including the BBC." In fact, as a search of media archives would have revealed, my conversion in 1998 was never mentioned until two years after the fact, and most of the media publicity in 2000 linking me with Copeland made no mention of it. But perhaps Senholt just meant to write something along the lines of 'the fact that Myatt was, at the time of Copeland's trial, a Muslim did not escape some of the mainstream media...'

Moving on to his claims that there are several things which link me with the ONA. All of these alleged links can be shown not only to be unsupported by the facts but also that they do not even amount, as Senholt states, to circumstantial evidence in support of the claim made that I am Anton Long. The claims are:

(1) The use of alternative dating systems, such as yf, by both me and the ONA.

The fact that group A and group B use the same or a similar alternative dating system is not proof that B is a subset of A, only of borrowing, imitation, adaptation, and possibly of plagiarism.

(2) Some occult texts with my name on them.

See the first part of 'omitted facts and circumstances', below - regarding using the occult as a neo-nazi honeytrap.

(3) That ONA insight roles included supporting neo-nazi groups and terrorism (neo-nazi and Islamic), things which I was openly involved with.

As with alternative dating systems and some ideas (such as acausality - see item (5) below) there is only a possible borrowing, imitation, adaptation, plagiarism.

Also, what is not mentioned are the other ONA insight roles which do not fit in with my life. Such as a police officer, assassin, and joining an anarchist group.

(4) That there is linguistic evidence linking my writings and those of 'Anton Long'.

No evidence from forensic linguistics is presented, so that this claim is just claim about two people using similar concepts and ideas and sometimes the same words.

That is, there is no direct evidence of a link, so that once again this is probably just others borrowing, imitating and adapting already existing ideas and concepts, something that, like plagiarism, happens all the time.

(5) That my departure from Islam (in 2009) coincided with 'Anton Long' writing a plethora of new ONA items.

Since Senholt does not give dates, and does not list the items, before and after this date, this is a rather vague assumption which also ignores two important facts. First, the vast quantity of literature I produced from 2006 onwards (following the suicide of my fiancée) in the form of essays about my Numinous Way/philosophy of patheismathos, letters, poetry, and so on. Second, Senholt does not discuss the fact that there were and are several self-confessed satanists (such as the pseudonymous Jason King) who are of opinion that most if not all of the newer, recent, items attributed to Anton Long were written by someone quite different from the 'original Anton Long' associated with the original ONA (or ONA 1.0 as King described it).

(6) That some of my ideas and concepts - such as acausality and Aeons and Homo Galactica - are and have been used by the ONA.

These concepts date to the early to middle 1970's, evident in such non-occult writings as *Emanations of Urania*, and, later on, in my *Vindex - Destiny of the West*.

As an early advocate of copyleft, I have never been bothered by plagiarism or by others using and adapting my ideas and my 'inventions', such as The Star Game. Thus there is use and adaptation by others, and possibly plagiarism, but no proof of a direct link.



In most of the above cases there is also the established and the admitted fact up until 1998 I knew, as friends, some of the people involved with various occult groups, although - as mentioned to Professor Kaplan <sup>[7]</sup> and others - I did not share their views with us therefore agreeing to disagree on many things. Thus some allowed borrowing of ideas, concepts, and inventions, by such friends is hardly surprising.

Finally, the omitted facts and circumstances that do not support Senholt's claims and conclusions include:

(1) My publicly stated admission, made in the 1990's in correspondence with Professor Kaplan and others - and publicly repeated by me many times in the past ten and more years - that my occult involvement, such as it was in the 1970's and later, was for the singular purpose of subversion and infiltration in the cause of National-Socialism, with part of this being to spread racist ideas and denial of the holocaust. Thus one such occult group I associated with was a honeytrap, and the whole intent was political, revolutionary, not occult and not to with 'satanism'. It was a matter of using, or trying to use, such occult groups for a specific neo-nazi purpose without any interest in or personal involvement with the occult.

As I wrote in part two (1973-1975) of *Ethos of Extremism*:

"In respect of covert action, I came to the conclusion, following some discussions with some C88 members, that two different types of covert groups, with different strategy and tactics, might be very useful in our struggle and thus aid us directly or aid whatever right-wing political party might serve as a cover for introducing NS policies or which could be used to advance our cause. These covert groups would not be paramilitary and thus would not resort to using armed force since that option was already covered, so far as I was then concerned, by C88.

The first type of covert group would essentially be a honeytrap, to attract non-political people who might be or who had the potential to be useful to the cause even if, or especially if, they had to be 'blackmailed' or persuaded into doing so at some future time. The second type of covert group would be devoted to establishing a small cadre of NS fanatics, of 'sleepers', to - when the time was right - be disruptive or generally subversive.

Nothing came of this second idea, and the few people I recruited during 1974 for the second group, migrated to help the first group, established the previous year. However, from the outset this first group was beset with problems for - in retrospect - two quite simple reasons, both down to me. First, my lack of leadership skills, and, second, the outer nature chosen for the group which was of a secret Occult group with the 'offer', the temptation, of sexual favours from female members in a ritualized Occult setting, with some of these female members being 'on the game' and associated with someone who was associated with my small gang of thieves [...]

But what happened was that, over time and under the guidance of its mentor, the Occult and especially the hedonistic aspects came to dominate over the political and subversive intent, with the *raisons d'etat* of blackmail and persuasion, of recruiting

useful, respectable, people thus lost. Hence, while I still considered, then and for quite some time afterwards, that the basic idea of such a subversive group, such a honeytrap, was sound, I gradually lost interest in this particular immoral honeytrap project until another spell in prison for an assortment of offences took me away from Leeds and my life as a violent neo-nazi activist [...]

I had occasion, during the 1980's, to renew my association not only with some old C88 comrades but also with the mentor of that Occult honeytrap when, after of lapse of many years, I became involved again in neo-nazi politics and revived my project of using clandestine recruitment for 'the cause'. By this time, that Occult group had developed some useful contacts, especially in the academic world, so some friendly co-operation between us was agreed; a co-operation which continued, sporadically, until just before my conversion to Islam in 1998.

This clandestine recruitment of mine was for a small National-Socialist cadre which went by a variety of names, beginning with 'G7' (soon abandoned), then *The White Wolves* (c. 1993), and finally the *Aryan Resistance Movement* aka Aryan Liberation Army [qv. Part Five for details].

However, while some of these Occult contacts were, given their professions, occasionally useful 'to the cause' and to 'our people', by 1997 I had come to the conclusion that the problems such association with Occultism and occultists caused far outweighed the subversive advantages; a conclusion which led me to re-write and re-issue a much earlier article of mine entitled *Occultism and National-Socialism*, and which revised article was subsequently published in the compilation *Cosmic Reich* by Renaissance Press of New Zealand. As I wrote in that article - "National-Socialism and Occultism are fundamentally, and irretrievably, incompatible and opposed to each other."

By the Summer of 1998 I had abandoned not only such co-operation and contacts with such Occult groups but also such clandestine recruitment on behalf of National-Socialism, concentrating instead on my Reichsfolk group and my 'revised' non-racist version of National-Socialism which I called 'ethical National-Socialism'. Later still, following my conversion to Islam, I was to reject even this version of National-Socialism."

This explains many things, including early occult articles with my name - not the name 'Anton Long' - in zines such as *The Lamp of Thoth*, and the early version of *Copula cum Daemone* (which in fact was about the birth of Adolf Hitler). One question Senholt does not ask is why both my name and the name Anton Long occur on the same early texts, with the simple answer being that there were two different people, one of whom (me) ceased all involvement with such occult honeytraps in 1998.

(2) My time as a Christian monk and my writings praising Catholicism in particular and Christianity in general.

This does not fit in with the claim of me being a life-long 'devotee of extreme ideologies' or being a satanist, so it is ignored. No attempt was made to use primary sources - to talk to people who knew me as monk and who could recount my life then, and my autobiography *Myngath* where I recount my time as a monk.

No mention is made of my many articles in which I praise Catholicism or refer to it in a positive way. For example, my mention of the numinosity of the Latin Tridentine Mass [qv. *Concerning The Nature of Religion and The Nature of The Numinous Way*] and of the sacrament of confession. As I wrote in *Soli Deo Gloria*:

"It is my personal opinion that traditional Catholicism, with its Tridentine Mass and its particular conservative traditions, was a somewhat better, more harmonious, expression of the numinous (a necessary and relevant expression of the numinous), than both Protestantism and the reforms introduced by the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, and which reforms served only to undermine the numinous, to untwist the threads that held together its 'hidden soul of harmony'."

There is also the small matter of me being married in Church in accordance with the Christian ceremony of marriage. And the small matter of writings of mine such as *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*.

(3) My article *Occultism and National-Socialism* - written in the 1980's and republished in the 1990's and again around 2006 - and in which I denounced occultism, is ignored.

(4) My writings about National Socialism and Islam - spanning some three decades - are for the most part ignored, except when they are adduced to show I, as a nazi or as a Muslim, incited violence and possibly terrorism. Are they ignored because they in their quantity and content reveal they were written by someone who was at the time of their writing a dedicated neo-nazi and then a dedicated Muslim, and which dedication to such causes most certainly precludes being some sort of sinister person who was just using those causes for his own satanic ends?

In addition, and importantly, what are also overlooked are:

(a) The very real threat of being imprisoned for some of those writings - something surely only a genuine fanatic, a believer, would be prepared to do.

(b) My decades of political activism on behalf of National-Socialism, my two terms of imprisonment resulting from such activities, and my involvement with the paramilitary group Column 88. Which long-term activities over some thirty years, which imprisonment, and which paramilitary involvement surely indicate an inner - a rather fanatical - dedication to that cause.

(c) My travels, as a Muslim, to certain lands, the talks I gave to and the discussions I had with Muslims <sup>[8]</sup>, and my regular attendance at Mosques to pray with other Muslims, which would indicate someone

who was, during those years, committed to that Way of Life.

(5) My semi-autobiographical poetry <sup>[9]</sup>, my published correspondence, and my ethical philosophy of The Numinous Way/philosophy of pathei-mathos, are completely ignored. Why are these voluminous writings and these ideas of mine ignored? Because they honestly reveal the thoughts and feelings and ideas and experiences and (importantly) the failings of someone so different from a satanist that they have to be ignored.

(6) My years of interior ethical and philosophical struggle to reform, to change, myself - documented in hundreds of letters, essays, poems, especially after the suicide of my fiancée in 2006 - are completely ignored. Why? Because they do not fit in with the idea, with the theory, of me being 'a deceitful, manipulative, sinister trickster', the archetypal satanist.<sup>[10]</sup>

It seems, therefore, that *some* of the facts of my life have been interpreted in order to fit a theory regarding some posited and ideal ONA member, with this interpreted ONA life - with inconvenient facts and circumstances conveniently omitted or ignored - then being held up as proof that I am Anton Long, since this truncated, re-interpreted, life of mine allegedly seems to fit in with the person Anton Long is alleged to be or is said to be according to his satanist writings or according to what some anonymous person has written on the World Wide Web.

In essence, there are no proofs presented in the thesis, with many aspects of my life omitted and with no mention, let alone analysis, of those voluminous writings of mine which portray a person almost the exact opposite of a satanist.

As one person wrote in respect of the rumour, the allegation, and the claim, that I am the pseudonymous Anton Long,

"We basically have a choice between: (i) believing Myatt is an astonishingly diabolical, duplicitous, creative, polymathical genius who over four decades has been playing 'sinister games' and who has not deviated from his youthful sinister cunning plan, and which diabolical genius makes the likes of Crowley and LaVey (and everyone else associated with modern Satanism and the 'left hand path') seem pathetic and mundane; or (ii) assuming Myatt has spent most of his adult life as a covert servant of the British state; or (iii) accepting that Myatt has lived a quite adventurous (but not an exceptionally amazing) life, has made mistakes, has suffered a personal tragedy, and has learned from and been changed by his experiences and by that tragedy [...]"

Which of [these] three scenarios is therefore the most plausible? Which offers the most simple, the most rational, explanation for Myatt's peregrinations? Which require the pomp of conspiracy theory,

and which involve superfluous causes, and (sometimes bizarre, sometimes astonishing) ad hoc assumptions and claims?" [11]

## Conclusion

In respect of allegations about involvement with satanism and 'being Anton Long' - and in respect of those who manufacture and propagate them - my own experience, my pathei-mathos, manifest in my philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, leads me to two conclusions. My first conclusion is that the research done by some modern authors and even some academics - whose works are published by reputable publishers or quoted by others engaged in academic research - is inadequate and does not meet the taxing criteria of scholarship. Thus these works are unreliable; they have no gravitas, no worth - in terms of learning - for the sagacious.

My second conclusion is that most if not all modern Media that concern themselves with the deeds and lives of individuals - from un-scholarly books and essays, to newspapers, to television news programs and political documentaries, to magazines, to the World Wide Web - are by their very impersonal and mass-media nature unethical. Why? Because they are un-numinous, and encourage and often embody hubris, being as they are the realm of personal opinions, hasty judgement, and misapprehension, and the abode of those for whom 'a story' or some personal/political agenda/prejudice or 'their career' or some unethical un-numinous abstraction (such as 'the public interest') come before honour, empathy, and the reasoned judgement of a personal knowing that has extended over a lengthy period of causal Time and/or been based on an extended period of scholarly research.

A corollary is that those who use such Media, and/or unscholarly books/essays, as sources of allegedly reliable information, as a guide, as *a* or as *the* basis for their judgement about and knowledge of someone or some many, are being unfair and uncultured because lacking in the following necessary virtues: (1) a reasoned, balanced, and thus ethical, judgement; (2) the empathy of manifold direct personal contacts; and (3) a scholarly research and/or a personal knowing extending over many years. Virtues which are the genesis of a genuine understanding of, and thence an unbiased knowledge of, another human being; and virtues which rapid, impersonal, mass means of modern communication actively discourage and which virtues are seldom, it seems, cultivated and employed by those involved with and who use and who rely on such modern means for information.

Quite simply it is matter of honour. Of personal knowing. As I mentioned above, the traditional gentlemanly and ladylike virtues and their cultivation are no longer the standard which individuals are expected to aspire to and to uphold. Thus I do not expect the plethora of rumours and allegations about me to suddenly cease, although I admit I do and perhaps naively nurture a vague

hope that what I have written here may cause a few individuals to reconsider the veracity of such rumours and allegations.

As for who and what I really am, I can only suggest the curious read such writings of mine as the following: (a) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*; (b) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*; and (c) *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

---

Notes:

[1] Many people seem to rely on four items in respect of accusations of occult involvement. These items are: (1) an article published in 1998 in the Searchlight magazine entitled *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*; (2) a 2009 thesis by Senholt entitled *Political Esotericism & the convergence of Radical Islam, Satanism and National Socialism in the Order of the Nine Angles*; (3) a chapter in Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke's book *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism and the Politics of Identity* (published in 2001); and (4) a 1974 interview I allegedly gave to a reporter.

(a) In respect of the Senholt, see the section in this article subtitled *The Logical Fallacy of Incomplete Evidence - A Case Study*.

(b) In respect of Goodrick-Clarke, his identification of me, in his book, as 'Anton Long' is solely based on his claim that I was the author of a manuscript entitled *Diablerie, Revelations of a Satanist* the only known copy of which is in the British Library. No evidence, no sources, are provided for this claim - this assumption. No evidences or sources are given for his other claims about me, such as that "the ONA was founded by David Myatt" or that I was "a long time devotee of satanism."

In addition, Goodrick-Clarke never bothered to contact me regarding these claims of his, and the first thing I knew about them was when the book was published. Had he contacted me, then, I would have been in a position to supply him with the unpublished autobiographical MS that the plagiarist had purloined and used as the source for that fanciful work of fiction entitled *Diablerie*. An unpublished autobiographical MS that I circulated to a few friends, and a few 'interested parties', in the 1980's when I was engaged in writing *The Logic of History* from which the text *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* (published in 1984) derived. One of 'the interested parties' was the publisher of *Vindex, The Destiny of the West* who subsequently published some other pro-NS works of mine. An interesting overview of *Diablerie* is given in the 2012 e-text *A Sceptics Review*

of *Diablerie*, by R. Parker.

It is interesting and - to me - relevant that among the many errors of Goodrick-Clarke are the following:

- i) I was not born in 1952, as he claimed.
- ii) I first met Colin Jordan in 1968, not 1969 as he claimed.
- iii) My two terms of imprisonment for political offences were not both for six months, as he claimed.
- iv) Morrison was never 'my follower' as Goodrick-Clarke claimed (Eddy was never anyone's follower).
- v) Morrison's first name is Eddy, not Eddie as Goodrick-Clarke claimed.
- vi) The Occult lady that 'Anton Long' met in the early 1970's did not 'lead the ONA' as Goodrick-Clark claimed, but rather the Camlad association, with the ONA being founded and then led by Anton Long himself following his meeting with that lady.
- vii) He mentions a certain Wulfram Tedder whom he claims was a former aide of Colin Jordan during the old NSM days, whereas 'W Tedder' was one of the noms-de-plume I used, for instance when writing for John Tyndall's *Spearhead* magazine in the 1980's.

It also interesting that Goodrick-Clarke was ignorant of - or did not bother to discover - many documented things about me during the late 1960's and the early 1970's, such as my arrest by the Yorkshire Regional Crime Squad for organizing a gang of thieves. Instead, the often fictitious account he gives of 'my life' during that time is almost entirely taken from the fictional *Diablerie* manuscript

Such errors, and the lack of evidence to support his assumptions about me, really say all that needs to be said about this particular 'source'.

Interestingly (perhaps) another fanciful work of fiction, similar to *Diablerie*, and purporting to be yet another autobiography by 'Anton Long' seems to have been recently written by someone, possibly for financial gain resulting from selling it at some silly price to collectors of rare Occult memorabilia. The bulk of this new fictional 'autobiography' consists of an early (now out of date) edition of *Myngath* to which various fictional autobiographical stories and 'sinister' incidents and diatribes have been added in line with what might be expected from a mythical 'Anton Long'. Given that the majority of these autobiographical stories in this so-called *Bealuwes Gast* are quite risible and fanciful (and not fundamentally satanic at all), and given that the 'sinister diatribes' seem to have been cut-and-pasted from various internet articles attributed to those who over the years have used the nom-de-plume Anton Long, it seems unlikely that this forgery will ever be taken seriously by anyone. I mean - and to name just one risible example - who can take seriously a 'clockwork orange cult' and the wearing of white lab coats to boot...

Since this *Bealuwes Gast* also contains certain autobiographical information

contained in private correspondence (e-mails) sent by me to a certain correspondent in 2009, I believe I know the identity of the author, or at least the identity of the person who supplied that private information to the author.

(c) In respect of the 1974 'interview', I reproduce a comment I made in part one of my *Autobiographical Notes*, first published in 2001:

" The journalist promised to let me read his final copy before it was published – a condition I had specified before giving the interview – and several photographs of me were taken, with him suggesting I hold something to do with the Occult, since he had noticed I had a collection of horror, and Occult, fiction (most of which in fact were given or loaned to me by Eddy Morrison). Perhaps foolishly, I agreed, holding up some Occult thingy which Joe Short had given to me a few days before. Our conversation lasted for about half an hour, during which the journalist took a few notes (it was not recorded).

I assumed that he would simply recount what I had said. Of course he neither showed me the article before publication, nor printed what I said, except for one short sentence about causing chaos. The journalist also made some rather silly allegations about animal sacrifice, which were investigated at the time by both the Police and the RSPCA whose conclusion was that they were fabrications concocted by the journalist, and perhaps, as I concluded, to get his name on the front page of the newspaper and sell more copies.

What surprised me (and to be honest, upset me, for a while), after this interview, was how so many people believed everything the journalist had written, without bothering to ask me for my side of the story. As if just because something was printed in some newspaper or other then "it must be true" or – as the cliché of mundanes goes: "there is no smoke without fire." And it was then that I learnt several valuable lessons: just how easily people can be manipulated, just how dishonest and conniving (and thus dishonourable) some journalists seemed to be, by nature; and just how powerful the established Media was, able make or break a person's reputation."

(d) In respect of the 1998 *Searchlight* item, I reproduce here a rather polemical item written by me, the fanatic, in 1998 (during my extremist decades) just before my conversion to Islam and privately circulated to the few members of Reichsfolk. The item was subsequently re-issued - with some amendments and alterations made by Richard Stirling - in 2003 as a confidential supplement to the *Reichsfolk Situation Report* of that year.

"Not once, in the past thirty years, has anyone provided any evidence of my alleged involvement with the Order of Nine Angles or with Satanism in general [...]

All *Searchlight* has ever done is make unsubstantiated allegations [...]

One of the unsubstantiated allegations of the *Searchlight* crowd is that I was a friend of someone called Vik Norris – something they blandly stated in their alleged 'expose' of me, under the headline *The Most Evil Nazi in Britain*, in the April 1998 issue of *Searchlight* magazine. No evidence for this allegation was presented then, or subsequently.



Indeed, the article simply contains bland assertions by them about me and Satanism with no evidence presented to support such assertions. For example: (1) they stated that the ONA was "formed by Myatt himself in the early 1980's" but offer no proof for this claim of theirs; (2) they write about "Myatt and his satanic friends" yet never name these alleged 'satanic' friends or provide any proof of involvement by any of my friends with Satanism; (3) they claim that "within days of being investigated", the ONA withdrew its material from the Internet and that I had shaved off my beard in an attempt to disguise myself, with yet again no evidence being provided for these allegations, which were patently untrue, as anyone could have verified at the time by searching the Internet, calling on me at my home or place of work or asking those with whom I worked.

Unsurprisingly, many people over the years have – for personal or political reasons – referenced this *Searchlight* article as 'proof' of my alleged involvement, when anyone of any sagacity on reading that and similar articles about me can rationally deduce that it and other such articles are merely malicious propaganda designed to discredit, but worded in such a dishonourable way that even were one to sue the authors for libel in a British civil court (assuming one had the money to do so) there would be no guarantee of success – a legalistic tactic such dishonourable journalists often rely on when they peddle their lies and make their malicious accusations.

As for me, I have never bothered to have recourse to civil law, and established Courts, to sue those making libellous allegations about me quite simply because the only law I believe in and strive to uphold is the law of personal honour. Given that I have challenged two journalists, according to the law of personal honour, to a duel with deadly weapons for making such malicious allegations, and given that they did not have the honour to accept this challenge or issue an apology in lieu of fighting a duel, I consider my honour vindicated and their own dishonourable character proven."

[2] The completed BBC programme was broadcast, as a 'Panorama Special' entitled *The Nailbomber*, on the 30th June, 2000. Nick Lowles, who at the time was working for *Searchlight*, was listed as the associate producer.

[3] The recent writings of mine include the compilation *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, as well as voluminous essays about The Numinous Way/The Way of Pathei-Mathos, and which mystical Way of Life is one of compassion, empathy, humility, gentleness, and love.

As I wrote in *Letter To My Undiscovered Self*,

"The honest, the obvious, truth was that I – and people like me or those who supported, followed, or were incited, inspired, by people like me – were and are the problem. That my, that our, alleged 'problems' (political/religious), were phantasmagorical; unreal; imagined; only projections based on, caused by, invented ideas that had no basis in reality, no basis in the simple reality of human beings. For the simple reality of most human beings is the need for simple, human, things: for personal love, for friendship, for a family, for a personal freedom, a security, a stability – a home, food, playfulness, a lack of danger – and for the dignity, the self-respect, that work provides.

But instead of love we, our selfish, our obsessed, our extremist kind, engendered hate. Instead of peace, we engendered struggle, conflict, killing. Instead of tolerance we engendered intolerance. Instead fairness and equality we engendered dishonour and discrimination. Instead of security we produced, we encouraged,

revolution, violence, change.

The problem, the problems, lay inside us, in our kind, not in 'the world', not in others. We, our kind - we the pursuers of, the inventors of, abstractions, of ideals, of ideologies; we the selfish, the arrogant, the hubriatic, the fanatics, the obsessed - were and are the main causes of hate, of conflict, of suffering, of inhumanity, of violence. Century after century, millennia after millennia [...]

That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover these simple truths surely reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for.

Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that,

I love delicate softness:  
For me, love has brought the brightness  
And the beauty of the Sun ....

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings. For that we just have to renounce our extremism, both inner and outer."

As I wrote in *Pathei-Mathos, Genesis of My Unknowing*:

"There are no excuses for my extremist past, for the suffering I caused to loved ones, to family, to friends, to those many more, those far more, 'unknown others' who were or who became the 'enemies' posited by some extremist ideology. No excuses because the extremism, the intolerance, the hatred, the violence, the inhumanity, the prejudice were mine; my responsibility, born from and expressive of my character; and because the discovery of, the learning of, the need to live, to regain, my humanity arose because of and from others and not because of me.

Thus what exposed my hubris - what for me broke down that certitude-of-knowing which extremism breeds and re-presents - was not something I did; not something I achieved; not something related to my character, my nature, at all. Instead, it was a gift offered to me by two others - the legacy left by their tragic early dying. That it took not one but two personal tragedies - some thirteen years apart - for me to accept and appreciate the gift of their love, their living, most surely reveals my failure, the hubris that for so long suffused me, and the strength and depth of my so lamentable extremism.

But the stark and uneasy truth is that I have no real, no definitive, answers for anyone, including myself. All I have now is a definite uncertainty of knowing, and certain feelings, some intuitions, some reflexions, a few certainly fallible suggestions arising mostly from

reflexions concerning that, my lamentable, past, and thus - perhaps - just a scent, just a scent, of some understanding concerning some-things, perfumed as this understanding is with ineffable sadness."

[4] A revised and updated version of Senholt's thesis, under the title *Secret Identities in The Sinister Tradition*, is included in Per Faxneld & Jesper Petersen: *The Devil's Party - Satanism in Modernity*, Oxford University Press, 2012. International Standard Book Number 9780199779246

[5] For my view on Goodrick-Clarke, see footnote 1.

[6] The logical fallacy of incomplete evidence is when material concerning or assumptions about a particular matter are selected and presented to support a particular argument or conclusion, while other material or assumptions which do not support, which contradict, the chosen argument or conclusion are withheld or not discussed. In effect, selective evidence and/or selective argument are used in order to 'prove' a particular point, with such selectively being deliberate, or the result of fallacious reasoning or unscholarly research.

[7] Refer to footnote #51 of Kaplan's book *Nation and Race*. Northeastern University Press. 1998.

[8] Refer to Mark Weitzmann, *Anti-Semitism and Terrorism*, in Diemel, Hans-Liudger (ed), *Terrorism and the Internet: Threats, Target Groups, Deradicalisation Strategies*. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series, vol. 67. IOS Press, 2010. pp.16-17.

[9] The compilation *Relict* contains my selection of most of those poems, written between 1971 and 2012, that I feel are worth reading.

[10] Mention perhaps should also be made of my many writings about extremism, my extremist past, and my rejection of extremism, which post-date Senholt's thesis, and in which writings I have endeavoured to explore and understand the roots of both my extremism and of extremism itself. These writings include *The Development of The Numinous Way* (2012) and *Recuyle of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (2012).

Other such writings are included in the more recent *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*.

Also of interest should be my seven-part retrospective and autobiographical text *The Ethos of Extremism, Some Reflexions on Politics and A Fanatical Life*, and which "personal reflexions on my forty years of extremism may be of interest to a few people, especially given that, as a result of experience, a pathei-mathos, I have come to reject racism, National-Socialism, hatred, and all forms of

extremism, having developed a personal weltanschauung, a non-religious numinous way, centred around empathy, compassion, fairness, and love."

[11] Wright, Julie. *David Myatt, Satanism, and the Order of Nine Angles*. e-text, 2012. Revised 2016.

---

cc David Wulstan Myatt 2011-2019  
This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

All translations by DW Myatt

---

## Research, Primary Sources, And Pathei-Mathos

A rather neglected aspect of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos derives from the second of the seven axioms that form its foundations, which axiom is that the knowing, the perception of a personal pathei-mathos is

"different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings." <sup>1</sup>

Appendix VII, *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, of *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* enumerate these essentials:

- (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
- (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
- (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
- (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first Rules of Reasoning which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and aspects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials.

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time. <sup>1</sup>

### Context

In the 2012 text *A Matter of Honour* I mentioned primary, secondary and tertiary sources, <sup>2</sup> and the logical fallacy of incomplete evidence and expressed the view that the criteria of scholarship

"is essentially two-fold: (i) of detailed, meticulous, unbiased research on and concerning a specific topic or topics or subject undertaken over a period of some considerable time, usually a year or more in duration, and of necessity involving primary source material; and (ii) a rational assessment of the knowledge acquired by such research, with such conclusions about the topic, topics, or subject therefore being not only the logical result of the cumulative scholarly learning so acquired but also possessing a certain gravitas." <sup>3</sup>

In the same work I also mentioned knowledge and that

"those who use [the] Media, and/or unscholarly books/essays, as sources of allegedly reliable information, as a guide, as a or as the basis for their judgement about and knowledge of someone or some many, are being unfair and uncultured because lacking in the following necessary virtues: (i) a reasoned, balanced, and thus ethical, judgement; (ii) the empathy of manifold direct personal contacts; and (ii) a scholarly research and/or a personal knowing extending over many years. Virtues which are the genesis of a genuine understanding of, and thence an unbiased knowledge of, another human being; and virtues which rapid, impersonal, mass means of modern communication actively discourage and which virtues are seldom, it seems, cultivated and employed by those involved with and who use and who rely on such modern means for information."

In *A May Day Interview* (2024) I expressed the perhaps elitist view that if such types who use the Media, and/or unscholarly books/essays, as sources

"had received in their youth a 'classical education', a learning of Ancient Greek, Latin, and a study of works such as *Hermeneutica Analytica Elenctica* and Euclid's Στοιχεῖα, they would not commit such errors [of reasoning]. Personally, I well remember the joy I had as a schoolboy in reading the set text *The Elements of Euclid For The Use of Schools and Colleges*, and in solving the geometrical problems we were given based on that text." <sup>4</sup>

Thus I regarded and regard reason, logical reasoning, and scholarship using primary sources, as essential human virtues.

## Primary Sources And Fallacies Of Reasoning

Some of the textbooks read in the late 1960 when in the Sixth Form included now almost forgotten works such as *Elementary Lessons in Logic* by W. Stanley Jevons (1889 edition) and *Logic* by Richard F. Clarke, SJ, which was part of the nineteenth century *Manuals Of Catholic Philosophy* series.

These books led the reader through the basics of classical logic and helpfully gave and explained fallacies of reasoning such as fallacies *extra dictionem* and common fallacies such as the now pervasive *argumentum ad hominem* and *argumentum ad verecundiam*, the appeal to authority.

What is noticeable is that in recent decades there have been attempts to redefine certain fallacies, an example being the appeal to authority, which is citing or quoting a person or persons who is of who are regarded, by the person citing or quoting or by others, as an authority on a subject with the implicit assumption or an overt spoken or written assertion that such an authority should be respected because, for instance, the 'authority' is an academic while the disputant is not and therefore the opinion or statement by the 'authority' is the correct one.

In the matter of the fallacy of appeal to authority the re-definition is along the following lines: that the fallacy is when the opinion of a non-expert on a topic is used as evidence; which statement is, while appearing to be a decisive statement concerning 'authority', is not so for two reasons. First, because the presumption is that the opinion or statement by a 'non-expert' is inferior to the opinion or statement of an 'expert'; second, there is the question of what criteria is used to define 'an expert' as distinct from a 'non-expert' and thus from whence or from whom or how the 'expert' derives their presumed authority on a particular subject; presumably by an appeal to others who are regarded, at the time, as 'experts' themselves, or by an appeal to the 'authority' of an academic institution or some conclave or institution of 'experts' on the subject in question.

This presumption regarding expert knowledge or expertise is contrary to both experimental science and scholarship, for both can and have been used to overturn accepted, and current or past 'expert', opinion.

David Myatt  
June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2024



1. *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, Part Two of *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

2. Among primary sources are original manuscripts germane to the subject or to a historical person, such as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, Papyrus Bodmer in the Vatican Library, and in the case of Sappho fragments of papyri such as P. Oxyrhynchus. XV, 1787 fr. 1 and 2; archaeological or fossil remains from an historical period; contemporaneous manuscripts, letters, diaries, memoirs, personal journals, interviews, speeches, and other materials which describe or relate (i) events in which a person or persons participated in or observers of, (ii) ideas or creations, such as music, a philosophy, works of literature, poetry, and art-work which a person was responsible for and also their published writings in their original language, and authenticated manuscripts published and unpublished.

The writings, opinions, and conclusions of others about such subjects or persons are secondary sources, with tertiary sources a collection or compendium of such secondary sources. In regard to the original language of primary sources, if a person venturing an opinion about such material cannot read the original language, and does not personally translate such a work or passages from such a work and thus has to use the translations of others then opinions and conclusions about that work are secondary sources.

3. *A Matter of Honour*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

4. *A May Day Interview*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/davidmyatt-may-day-interview.pdf>

## The Centuries, Not The Decades



≡ ≡ ≡

Over fifty years ago, in the 1970s, my concern was the next political confrontation, the next street fight with political opponents, the next piece of propaganda I would produce, motivated as I was by a Certitude-of-Knowing, a fanaticism, born of the belief that I had found the right answers, the right solutions, to certain problems of a political and social kind.

Now, after decades of practical experience which included two terms of imprisonment, the loss of two loved ones, travels in various foreign lands, and a decade and more of working with my hands in rural occupations, my concern has become my Uncertainty-of-Knowing: of how and why my earlier hubris has, mostly against my will, somehow given way to an often wordless appreciation and a wordless knowing of Nature and of my place as one fallible mortal temporarily living, for only some decades, on one planet orbiting one Star in one Galaxy among a Universe of billions of Galaxies. Of how I owe a debt, have an obligation, to Nature - *Debitum Naturæ* - and almost certainly a debt to whatever is or was the genesis of Nature, of the variety of life, here and possibly elsewhere in the Cosmos.

There thus has developed in me a perspective far beyond politics and far beyond the years and the decades where those with a political or a religious Certitude-of-Knowing try from whatever motive, or some scheming, to change what-is to what they, or others whose authority they accept, believe should-be based on some personal or adopted political or religious or social certitude. For all they seem to have done or do is perpetuate the cycle of suffering as I perpetuated it during my decades as a political and then as a religious fanatic.

This new perspective of mine is of the centuries yet to be and of how we as individuals can cease to interfere, from whatever motive, in the world beyond our own personal world because while such interference may in some circumstances change and often has changed our and other societies temporarily 'for the better' such change does not, in the perspective of centuries, last. A revolution here; a change of government; a war there; an invasion of this or that land; repressive laws; the extra-judicial killing or assassination of this or that official or leader...

There are so many examples over so many centuries. Did the brutality of ancient Rome - the slaughter of Boudica and her followers not long after her victory over the Ninth Legion; the killings, including the murder of Cicero, during the Second Triumvirate; the crucifixion of thousands of followers of Spartacus along the Appian Way; the crucifixion of Jesus and the killing of many early Christians - prevent the fall of the Roman Empire? Did the First and Second World Wars, with their millions of people killed, solve the internal problems of, for example, America and Britain: the poverty; the deprivation, the inequality that still haunts them? Et cetera.

Yet we always find excuses for ourselves, for others: that 'next time it will be different' and that some existing government or some newly declared enemy foreign or domestic 'must be opposed and defeated' by whatever means because 'we' are right and 'they' are wrong. Thus does the internal violence, the hatred and often the internal repression, and the foreign killing and the destruction, continue decade after decade, century following century.

Is this all that we are or all we can be? Decades ago in one of those rare perceptions of acausal Time, I vainly tried to express in words that fleeting perception of another world, of another way of living. <sup>1</sup> But as so often between 1968 and 2006 it was, as other such moments were, forgotten in the maelstrom formed by still believed-in causal impersonal abstractions and by my arrogant belief that I should, must, change what-is to what I hubriatically believed it should-be.

I needed to resist, then; I should have resisted, remembering. But remembering and resisting what? Remembering the deeds done; the suffering caused; resisting the hubris that vivified my personal life, manifest as my hubris was in a personal Certitude-of-Knowing. Now, almost every day, I strive to remember in words such as this the long and difficult journey from city-street to farm-field, from battle-song to plainchant to rural silence, conveyed as I seem to have been to move beyond causal impersonal abstractions to a consideration of the centuries not the decades.

And what you thought you came for  
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning  
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled  
If at all. Either you had no purpose



Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured  
And is altered in fulfilment. <sup>2</sup>

David Myatt  
August 2024

≡ ≡ ≡

[1]

Snow, hill-whitening, while a cool Sun journeys  
Slowly  
Beyond the cloud  
That touches the Mynd in a slow dance  
Of beauty.

There is a moment, of youthful hope:  
A Thrush to descend down to pick  
The storm-red berries from a grey-green tree  
Of holly  
Stout, strong, from more than ten-score Sun-warmed  
Summers.

It is the twilight time, of life:  
There is no music, no painting, no books in preparation  
For this  
As if the labours of those who artfully laboured  
Went unremarked, misunderstood  
Thousand year upon thousand year:  
Few seeds sown, as berries sow new life.

Yet I heard them call out, once, often, in a dreamful youth  
When hilltop viewing at night beneath  
A night of stars  
Knowing no difference because I had yet to learn  
As adults learn  
To constrict the flow of Thought:  
One individual, striving, among so many  
With so many needs  
To feed our flow of life.

But there is a learning here  
As a breeze, gusting cold, moves cloud  
To free the blue-beauty which is our planet's sky:  
A remembering  
Of the empathy  
Which is, should be, our individual evolution  
Of life.

c.1980

[2] TS Eliot: Little Gidding

≡ ≡ ≡

Image credit:

Travelling home after a day working on a farm near Malvern.  
Surveillance photograph, Spring 2000,  
by a Private Investigator hired by the BBC



## Relict

### A Selection of Poems by David Myatt

My poetry was composed between the years 1971-2012, and is of varying quality. Having undertaken the onerous task of re-reading those poems that I still have copies of, there are in my fallible view only around a dozen that I consider may possibly be good enough to be read by others. This collection contains these few poems, and most are autobiographical in nature.

David Myatt  
2012

---

### One Exquisite Silence

These are the moments of an exquisite silence  
As we lie together on your sofa, holding, pressing  
Our bodies together  
As I, gently, stroke your face and hair  
And you kiss each finger of my hand.

There is a fire of logs to warm us,  
As night descends:

There are no words to confuse,  
No time, as we flow, together,  
As clouds on a warm Summer's day  
Beneath a dome of blue.

There is a peace, here, which fills us  
As if we are the world and all the beautiful, peaceful, things  
Of the world.

Nearby, your two ginger cats sleep  
Secure in the warmth of their world  
As we are secured while we lie,  
Wordless, feeling those subtle energies  
Born from no barriers:  
You are me as I am you,  
In such exquisite moments.

But you belong to another  
And it is against my will, my dreams, desires  
That I leave  
To walk the lonely miles under moonlight  
To where a dreary lamp lights my empty room.

(2003)

---

### Dark Clouds of Thunder

The moment of sublime knowing  
As clouds part above the Bay  
And the heat of Summer dries the spots of rain  
Still falling:  
I am, here, now, where dark clouds of thunder

Have given way to blue  
Such that the tide, turning,  
Begins to break my vow of distance  
Down.

A women, there, whose dog, disobeying,  
Splashes sea with sand until new interest  
Takes him where  
This bearded man of greying hair  
No longer reeks  
With sadness.

Instead:  
The smile of joy when Sun of Summer  
Presents again this Paradise of Earth  
For I am only tears, falling

(c. 2010)

---

### The Sun, The City

The Sun, the city, to wear such sadness down  
For I am only one among the many  
Where a night-of-dreams becomes unreal  
With all that is human living, dwelling,  
Faster slower slowing grateful hateful hoping loving  
Here:  
No Time to relay the inner rush of sorrow  
That breaks, broken, by some scheming need to-be  
Since the 1-train, conveying, is here to grace me  
In perspective.

But there are moments, to still,  
When - tasks, duty - done  
That inner quietness betrays  
So that I sit where

The Sun of English Summer  
Would could bring me down  
There where the meadow grass had grown  
Green greener drier keener  
And farm's field by hedge with scent  
Would keep me still but sweating -  
No cider to induce  
Then that needed paradisal-sleep.

And now: now I only this all this,  
One being cavorting where one past melds  
To keep me silent, still, so that the sidewalk  
Is only that sidewalk, there  
Where hope, clustering, fastly moves us  
On.  
Good, bad, indifferent - it makes no difference:  
I am no one to judge so many, any,  
So that there is - becomes - only the walk faster slower slowing here  
And we free in Sun to trust to sleep to-be to seep a dream  
Bought at some cost, to many:

*Fidelis ad Mortem*

And yet there is the Sun, the city, to witness how we can should must break  
Such sadness down.

(2012)

---

## Wine

Stale  
I once drank you  
Knowing no difference because of herbs.

She held me, her cunning hands  
That did not wish  
Nor offer the warmth that snared my soul:  
The wine was  
Intoxicating our senses  
But only I was drunk:  
She laughed.

I needed rest  
Dreaming marriage under sun -  
Until bright morning came  
When she, alas, changed  
Her form in the reality of the room  
And I was left to walk with my sack  
Down the dusty track  
Past a grove of sun-burnt trees  
Toward those distant hills:

And yet the white-washed house was only  
One step  
Along my Way.

(1972)

---

## No Sun To Warm

There is an ineffable sadness  
For your eyes betray that warmth, that beauty,  
That brings me down  
To where even my street-hardened Will cannot go:  
So I am sad, almost crying

Outside, there is no sun to warm  
As yesterday when I touched the warmth of your breasts  
And the wordless joy of ecstatic youth  
Lived to suffuse if only briefly with world-defying life  
This tired battle-bruised body

But now: clouds, rain-bleakness  
To darken such dreams as break me.  
For there are many places I cannot go.

(1974)

---

## Closeness Becomes Us

This is the life of silence  
As she lives warm, within -  
There where a net of dreams is woven  
By a day's walk, a night's love,  
And those hopes that stretched out as our hands entwining  
Seeking some horizon  
Beyond  
Where the cloudy sky of our dull October day  
Became the silky sandful warmful Summer smoothness of beach  
Beside a sea azure, Sunful, clear - and warming.

These are the moments of her silence  
As she lies warm within such arms as hold her  
And the blood of sleep, slowing, keeps her still  
Because the nightful sky of night is still

With stars  
And the breath to keep her living  
Is a gentle tide to ebb to rise to flow  
Upon our shore of sharing.

There is sand still – a little – between her toes  
Unwashed by such haste as brought us  
Back, back to one bed shared  
Because we could not would not wait  
To be together to seep again  
Here where, door locked, the world divides  
To be only that which we feel dream see, and flow  
Here where daylight seeped sepia-softly  
To become our starlit night bright  
With stars.

Now, now surely I have dreams memories ecstasy enough  
To keep the inner smile  
As time, my time, seeps to break me  
As those three score years and ten seek to break  
Each Earth-dwelling being of Life.

So, three decades older, I touch and touch with gentle touch  
The warm soft tautful flesh that keeps her youth  
The way our warmth melds us  
As the scent of night, sea and sex  
Melds together to be a perfume for her Sun  
To warm me here  
Where I am nothing more than moments.

For these are such moments of a loveful silence  
Seeping  
That I could die here peaceful in her sleepful scented arms

(2009)

---

### Such A Poem As This

There is work - the overtime - long walks under Sun, stars  
To keep me distracted  
For there is then no hours-long dwelling on your absence:  
But this music undid such willful cunning plans:

You were there, then, as that Lute sounded,  
Here, so real in memory, I touched our dream:  
Warm, sensuous, as when that day I held your hand, felt your body  
And empathy, sorrow, memory, made you cry.  
I loved you then in that moment with a strength which surprised me  
And had to fight to keep  
That truth, my tears, from bursting forth:  
Such love a torrent sweeping my calm of years  
Away.

This week will become the month of loss,  
This month a toil endured  
As when the weary soil, drought-kept,  
Waits, waiting, to bring forth flowering joy from seeds,  
Like memory, sown from tears that are earth's rain,  
My pain.

I know - and because I know the you  
The years of sadness, doubt, self-loathing, hid and hides away,  
I love the love that has no words I know:  
Such love that is only the touch of you, the smile of you, the need of you, the scent of you,  
The longing to be with you as if my love might redeem  
The sorrows which made you hide  
Still hiding a hope, within.

So much to say before you travel to stay a month away  
With he who is your choice:  
So much to miss I am, will be, lost  
Needing now to run the miles to your house  
Bearing such a poem as this.  
This is all I have -  
No house, car, money, prospects.  
Only a love, a dream  
Seen when I kissed your tears before you rested your head  
On my shoulder that one night of belonging  
When we knew, felt, touched, remembered, the essence.

But - three decades of love, thwarted - I am no longer naive enough to believe  
You will be mine  
And so I shall not, cannot, will not - must not - call upon you bearing  
Such a poem as this.

2003

---

### **A Summer Sun**

Crows calling while sheep cry  
By the road that shall take them  
To their death:  
I sit, while sun lasts  
And bleeds my body dry  
In this last hour before dark  
On a day when a warm wind  
Carried the rain that washed  
A little of this valley  
Like the stream washes  
My rock:

There are no trees to soften  
This sun - only heather and fern  
To break the sides of the hill.  
I cannot keep this peace  
I have found -  
It seems unformed like water  
Becomes unformed without a vessel  
A channel or some stream:  
It cannot be contained  
As I contain my passion and my dreams.

There are no answers I can find  
Only the vessel of walks in hills  
Alone  
Whereby I who seek  
Am brought toward the magick peak  
That keeps this hidden world  
Alive:

It does not last  
But like the cirrus cloud  
Is blown by breeze to free  
A summer sun.

(c. 1975)

---

### **Only Time Has Stopped**

Here I have stopped  
Because only Time goes on within my dream:  
Yesterday I was awoken, again,

And she held me down  
With her body warmth  
Until, satisfied, I went alone  
Walking  
And trying to remember:

A sun in a white clouded sky  
Morning dawn yellow  
Sways the breath that, hot, I exhale tasting of her lips.  
The water has cut, deep, into  
The estuary bank  
And the mallard swims against the flow -  
No movement, only effort.  
Nearby - the foreign ship which brought me  
Is held by rusty chains  
Which, one day and soon  
And peeling them like its paint,  
Must leave.

Here I shall begin again  
Because Time, at last, has stopped  
Since I have remembered the dark ecstasy  
Which brought that war-seeking Dream

(c. 1978)

---

### Relict

Sun, broken by branch, seeps  
Into mist  
Where spreading roots have cracked  
The stones, overgrown, perhaps,  
For an hundred years  
From a seed, flesh fed, the oak  
Sheltering

Mary  
Relict of William

And a breeze, stirring again  
This year  
The leaves of an Autumn's green gold

(1976)

---

### The Two Faces

I am the two faces of God -  
Vox Patris Caelestis -  
While, within, a lewd Satan grins  
Playing at Change:  
My pieces are human who cried  
At my hurt.  
I am alone, the cry  
While Treble voices sing  
Echoing, and strange shadows long dead  
Dance too briefly along the cloister wall.

There is pain as I stare  
Past dying sun and a valley  
Winter cold  
Trying to believe while stars break  
And a crescent moon  
Glowing like the whore's eyes  
In that dark room  
Jibbers over the heavy breasts  
Of the hill:  
No cloud

To veil her shame.

No one, nothing  
Answers. Only  
Air, and I sit, still waiting  
And remembering prayer.  
In the ruins, my dead self comes to life  
Rising slowly, worm-slowly  
To the first singing blackness  
Of night.

No answers, nothing:  
Only this tramp sheltering  
In the ruins of a church -  
And memories, yes there are memories  
Glowing  
Like the lies of my life

(1974)

---

### Letter

It is raining  
And I am watered  
And cold

There is warmth in love  
Which explains my wait  
By this road while cars pass  
Noisy in the shielding dark:  
My spirit is not seen as it sits  
On the wooden bench where hill  
Meets valley sky  
And where a standing stone waits  
To whisper words  
Of a language that has died.  
But I listen, while rain falls,  
Hearing your cry.

Always a dream or a memory  
Lead us on  
And we wait like children  
Trusting in the spirits of the Earth.  
We love unsuspecting  
While they our lovers scheme,  
Succour themselves on our blood  
And bleed us dry.

There is a sun as we sit  
In the heat of a summer  
On this bench as new lovers  
Holding hands -  
Transmuting all the dark days  
The tears of our past  
In the touch that mingles our auras  
As they must be mingled to bring  
The words of our waiting stone  
Alive:

Always this dream  
Leads me on.  
But it is raining  
And in the rain I hear  
Your spirit cry

(1987)

---



## In The Night

A bright quarter moon  
As I ran alone in the cold hours  
Along the sunken road that twists  
Between hill-valley and stream:

There was a dream, in the night  
That woke me – a sadness  
To make me sit by the fire  
Then take me out, moon-seeing  
And running, to hear only my feet  
My breath, to smell only the coldness  
Of the still, silent air:

But no spell, no wish  
Brought my distant lover to me  
And I was left to run slowly  
Back  
And wait the long hours  
To Dawn.

By the fire, I think of nothing  
Except the warmth of my love  
No longer needed.

(1986)

---

**cc David Myatt 1972-2012**  
**Fourth Edition**

These poems are covered by the Creative Commons (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0) License  
and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

---

---

## Four Forgotten Poems

by David Myatt

### The Returning

All seasons transcend  
Since each day differs  
Through its cloud and its sun.

In the wood, gold spreads  
Slowly  
Like the slow death it is  
As every soft colour is returned.  
Only pasture remains green  
Below mist  
While brown earth is broken  
By plough:

Sufficiency is shelter itself  
And the once reluctant farmer nods  
As he turns with his bent back  
Where sun rests  
Between its hill and his home.  
It will be gone, soon, this sun  
Lost  
While stars stare down the sky  
Where for fifty years  
His house has stood  
Stone grey among muddy sheep-torn grass.

There was a horse, then,  
To plough the steep slope  
Of his hill: a different way  
When even the village  
Fifteen furlongs west  
Was wary of all change.

But shelter is sufficiency itself  
He knows  
As he walks the short path  
To his home.  
There will be fire,  
A son's warm wife  
To welcome this leathery skin.

He is old, he knows,  
Worn like the oak, and his path  
Which three years of bloody hands  
Tore from Her earth  
And which each year She renews.

All rain can be smelt

In the wood, wind spins  
Slowly, like Earth.  
There is a mist, a mingling  
While the fallen man waits among leaves  
Like Her kestrel  
For death.

Every wind is his breath.

(c.1984)

o o o o o

### A Warm Day One Spring

In the hills  
Where heat haze is scattered  
By wind  
Wisdom sits like the shepherd  
Waiting;  
No words suffice  
While bleached bracken  
Scratches beneath blue.

Nearby, heather sprouts  
Where silty shales chewed  
By frost  
Crumble slowly like life:

There is no haste  
Where eighty years of wind  
Have twisted the small Douglas tree  
Like this Peregrine twists  
Itself in flight:

Somewhere a death

While on the road below  
Two cars scurry  
Noiseless like lice:  
Soon they will rust  
Just as I will be bleached bones  
And dust.

Little endures  
Like this rock

(c.1984)

o o o o o

### **Travelling**

A hot day in Summer as I walk  
Slowly  
But fastly sweating  
Down this road  
While speeding traffic passes  
As speeding traffic does:  
The drivers seem unaware or careless  
Of my slowness  
And grimly swerve to almost  
Touch me  
Here where a town - ten miles distant - creeps  
Over a river to spread across  
A narrow greening plain.

There is food in the town,  
A path's beginning to take me upward  
And turning through a forest  
To the sheep-sided hills  
Beyond.

Slowly, my world passes -  
I cannot comprehend the rush  
And sit in the hot sun on a low wall  
Having passing through the breathless body  
Of this town.

Even my water is warm  
And suspicious faces watch me  
As their owners in gardens surround themselves  
With sound:  
There seems a rushing in the seeping loud  
Music, a barrier  
To keep my slow moving solitary travelling world

Away -  
I smile, but my beard, my worn clothes -  
Perhaps my eyes - mark me.

A few hours  
And it is good to be alone again  
Among the peace of hills  
Where my walking slowness seems to frame  
Each slowly passing world:

Above - clouds  
To herald some future rain.

(1975)

o o o o o

### Remembering

Haunting  
As the cry of the owl  
Within the frost of night  
When I walked to this stream  
With no moon:

I saw your face as I waited for dreams,  
Tired by my waiting:  
You the ghost walking the path  
Of my life.

Sun came, slowly, bringing  
A little mist around the stream,  
A spreading calm to make me stretch  
And walk like an old man  
Bent by cold and doubt.

Here in the valley no trees exist  
To greet in wakeing this Winter's sun -  
There is only frost-bruised heather  
And fern,  
No song  
Of birds, only  
The timbre of stream.

Slowly, cold-raw hands  
Transform a little warmth  
From my dream:  
How many more nights shall I need  
To remember  
Until I cannot forget  
Again?

(1987)

---

## Some Poems Of A Vagabond

1974-1975



---

### Cathedral Grave Near The Sea

Erected by Alexander and Helen  
In Memory of their Children:  
James, who died aged 2 years. Buried Here.  
Alexander, Mariner, who died at Batavia  
8th Dec. 1830 aged 25.  
John, Capt. Of the Ship Erin-Go-Bragh  
of Cork, who died near Panama  
22nd April 1852 aged 32.  
Andrew, Engineer, who died 9th Dec. 1856  
aged 32

A warm October sun  
And I sense, standing here among the graves,  
That hidden meaning of life:  
"This is all that there is" -  
Peace, brought by warmth  
Because there is a freedom from  
Desiring desires.

I am here, where sky meets sea  
And where rocks descend into surf.  
I am at peace, at last -  
Able to remember to love  
Those forgotten gods who allowed me my birth.

There is no noise, here,  
No modern music -  
Only the slow silent passing of a Time,  
Almost forgotten now,  
Which perhaps only War, a death,  
Some natural disaster can remind.

Nearby, a young woman walks  
Shedding her beauty as the cold wind sheds  
The hot breath:  
And I am pained, stung bodily  
Not by desire but by a feeling  
Far beyond my possibility of words.  
I do not belong, as she and others belong  
As they cling to the passions of Earth.

It is not that I am detached or have transcended emotion:  
Rather, I am sad - burdened  
By a deep naked knowledge of myself.  
So I am alone,  
A monk of a dead religion  
With neither monastery nor home.

## Walking

Rain, falling heavy as rain does  
In storm.  
It is beating down  
While I wait in this cold tent  
For the light of dawn.  
I am alone, as I came, to this clearing  
Within trees:  
Trying to live the moments that are those  
Moments between the walks I walk  
Upon roads:

Rain, beating heavy as the pain in my leg:  
I have no rôle to guide me, happy, toward  
My death  
Only a wish for some warm soup  
To suckle my soul.  
There is instead rain with no fuel  
For the stove.

I am alone, as once I wished:  
And in the morning  
I shall shoulder my pack  
And walk -  
Is rain the seed, the sun the sower  
For the fecund planet called Earth?  
Am I one seed who by silence alone  
Can breed a flower of Thought?

But it is late and I close my eyes  
To sleep

≡ ≡ ≡

## Summer Days Travelling Roads

Day hides the stars that might shine tonight  
As my life when the loneliness comes  
Among the hills:  
I have touched the joy that goes  
Seeping down into darkness  
Rooting my soul that thus a storm  
Cannot wash it away.  
Here - a smile to capture worlds  
With hidden words  
When I believe a night has no terrors  
Like my own  
And I sleep at peace  
Beneath the dome of stars.

I - passing the world  
That way each day passes to a week -  
Shook dust from my clothes  
And walked barefoot toward a village green.

It was no use -  
I had only to forget to remember  
The silence where I in gladness sang  
Stopping those spirits who had waited by their trees  
For one like me to visit them,  
Again.

So I sit on the damp grass  
Waiting  
For a world of love.  
Then, smiling, I shake away the dew  
To walk barefoot across a village green.

≡ ≡ ≡

## Etude

A sudden silence -  
No longer can I hear the many sounds  
Of Nature.  
A falling darkness -  
No longer can I see the distant hills.

Instead:  
Whispering shadows hang upon the Earth  
Tendons of a goddess mauling the insignificance  
That is me.

Sudden rain -  
Tempestuous in sylphic fury;  
A blinding flash  
Startling in its nearness  
As I walk a country path.  
Then - shattering shouts as the wrath of the gods  
Rolls around me.

Suddenly  
No longer am I calm  
No longer am I still -  
Instead:  
Throwing wide arms of madness thrashing  
Dancing dance of Daedalian dreams  
In tears of goddess weeping sadness  
I come to joy and youthful schemes  
Feeling a freedom brought, at last!

Foolish self -  
Left standing in light left by passing storm,  
Hoping no one human has seen.  
Then, mindful of the past, and smiling,  
I return to tramp the country lane.

≡ ≡ ≡

## One Bench Along The Way

He was called Steve:  
Or so he said when we met one very cold  
Bleak October morning  
In that grey-stoned Cumbrian town,  
He, Northbound, while I was travelling  
South.

I passed the bench where he sat on his bag  
And we knew each other immediately:  
The beard, the many layers of clothes,  
The slightly dirty hands,  
The boots, the sun-touched wearied face.

So I sat to idle away a few  
Of those hours which - often more than rain -  
Were an enemy  
Of ours.  
He offered smokes, a drink of Brandy  
And I - some bread.

Warm again - for a while -  
We spoke as friends unmet in some time:  
He of a place nearby where a fire could be lit,  
Of a shop selling cheap food,  
Of recent travels

And how last Winter near Morecombe Bay  
He had collapsed, from cold.  
And I, I spoke of one week's work waiting somewhere, South,  
Of how Summer days walking roads had tired me,  
And how bin-bags are useful wrapped around the legs  
At night.

It was good, cheering, to spend those hours talking  
While people passed,  
Some staring:  
Our world the bench where we sat, the shelter of the night before  
When frost broke our sleep into short and shorter spells  
And left us huddled, tired,  
With only a walk - or Rum or Brandy -  
To warm us.

There is no Sun, here, now,  
No dreams, and - the Brandy gone -  
We parted, quite happy then within our wandering, homeless, world:  
He, to fetch more warming spirits,  
I to begin one more journey, South.

≡ ≡ ≡

## Road

I wander aimless along a road  
Fresh food to allow me thought:  
Ahead, a dead thrush  
Its carcass decaying  
While in the hedge above, bush buds  
Burst with life.

Even the wind seems warm  
As I walk  
Watching the White Horse on its hill  
While streaming streaks of high cirrus  
Cloud  
Fleck the changing blue:

There is a freedom here  
A pattern to possess my life:  
Each day brings me  
Close



## Regarding The Translations

Collected here are some of my translations of texts in Ancient Greek. My methodology has varied over the decades. In my 1990s translations of Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Sappho, I spent months before beginning each translation reading works about the milieu in which the authors lived and commentaries on the texts including, in regard to Sophocles, *The Plays And Fragments* by Richard Claverhouse Jebb. I then acquired the latest critical edition of the texts; for example in the case of Antigone the *Sophoclis Tragoedia*, Tom.II, Teubner, 1985 by R.D. Dawe.

Although I wrote a some notes in longhand to a few sections of some of those translations, and filled several notebooks with a longhand commentary on some parts of The Agamemnon, there was no desire, due to work commitments and the illness and subsequent early death of a loved one, to write comprehensive commentaries. Those notes and that partial commentary were later lost due to several changes of domicile following that tragic event.

Following my retirement nearly two decades later, I did write fairly comprehensive commentaries to my translations of eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and to the Gospel of John, which commentaries were included in the published editions of those works.

The text *One Perceiversion: Concerning Translations* contains some essays about my methodology in regard to those two and other later works such as the Greek quotation attributed (Theophrastus, Simplicius) to Anaximander.

DW Myatt  
June 2024

# The Agamemnon of Aeschylus

A Translation  
by  
David Wulstan Myatt

## Introduction

This translation of the 'Agamemnon' has, hopefully, restored to Aeschylus that pagan vigour and understanding which is essential if one is to appreciate not only the work of Aeschylus, but also the culture of classical Greece.

Aeschylus, along with many other ancient classical authors, has often suffered at the hands of those who have tried to translate Greek into English. Perhaps the greatest disservice done to him - and the others - is the rendering of certain concepts, mostly described by a particular Greek word, in what is fundamentally an un-Hellenic, abstract and moral way - albeit that this seems to be mostly unconsciously done. What results from this thoughtlessness is more often than not a sort of Christianizing of Greek culture in retrospect, and thus a lack of insight into and understanding of the Hellenic way of living.

One thinks here of verses like 1654-1656 from the 'Agamemnon'. This is often mis-translated to give something like: "No more violence. Here is a monstrous harvest and a bitter reaping time. There is pain enough already. Let us not be bloody now." The effect of such a 'translation' - notwithstanding the abstract and modern concepts like "time" - is a moral one: the speaker (here, Clytaemnestra) apparently says, after killing Agamemnon and Cassandra, that she does not want any more "violence" and describes her killings as "monstrous".

However, what Aeschylus actually has Clytaemnestra say is: "Let us not do any more harm for to reap these many would make it an *unlucky* harvest: injure them just enough, but do not stain us with their blood." The whole tone is different - she is being practical and does not want to bring misfortune upon herself (or Aegisthus) by killing to excess. The killings she has done are quite acceptable to her - she has vigorously defended them claiming it was her duty to avenge her daughter and the insult done to her by Agamemnon bringing his mistress, Cassandra, into her home. Clytaemnestra shows no pity for the Elders whom Aegisthus wishes to kill: "if you must", she says, "you can injure them. But do not kill them - that would be *unlucky* for us."

Another example will make clear how moral abstractions are projected onto the text by the mistranslation of certain words. Consider lines 369-373 from the 'Agamemnon'. Conventionally: "A man thought the gods deigned not to punish mortals who trampled down the delicacy of things inviolable. That man was wicked."

A correct rendering would be along the following lines: "Someone denied that the gods deem it worthy to concern themselves with mortals who trample upon what, being untouchable, brings delight. But such persons have [or 'show'] no *proper respect*."

The difference here is startling and obvious. The first is moral in the Christian sense - involving abstract, fundamentally monotheistic notions like 'wickedness' and 'sin'. The second is pagan, or Hellenic, and re-presents the true spirit or ethos of the culture celebrated by Homer and manifest, for example, in the sons of Atreus and the story of Antigone.

The result of such moral projection - and other acts of thoughtlessness - has been to destroy the vitality of the original and, incidentally, make it seem rather boring. I, however, have taken a contextual view of those concepts and words - such as κακός, δόμος, and so on - which are important to both a general and specific understanding of the Agamemnon. Thus in lines 400 and 410 for instance I have translated δόμος as 'clan', since having Paris visit the clan of those sons of Atreus and having the prophets of the clan declaiming *Alas for this clan - and its leaders!* is, in my view, a better translation than the bland and easily misunderstood 'house' or family because more expressive of the warrior culture of that time especially as Agamemnon is the warrior chief of his clan. Similarly, in respect of πόλις and Helen and poetic Aeschylean words such as ἑλέναυς:

Who was the one who - in all ways true - named her?  
Was it not someone who is never seen -  
With a perception of destiny -  
Whose tongue, chancing upon it, bestowed upon she  
Of that quarrel-making, battle-producing marriage  
The name Helen?  
Since, fittingly named, she - man-seducing, clan-seducing, ship-seducing -  
Leaving her gorgeous web of veils,  
Was with the breath of the giant Zephyrus  
Navigated away.  
And many were the shield-bearing men who hunted her

v.681f

I have also, where I considered it appropriate, transliterated δαίμων as daimon, rather than interpreted it as 'god' - which it is not - or 'spirit', which does not capture its correct relationship to and with the Greek gods.

In my translation, therefore, I have tried to capture not only the pagan ethos of the original but also the images and metaphors of Aeschylus. The result, I hope, is a version which is enjoyable in its own right when either read or heard in performance, and which can be of use to students of Ancient Greek and to those studying the culture of Ancient Greece.

The text used is that of Martin West (Teubner, 1991) and where the translation is enclosed within curly brackets { } it indicates a conjectural interpretation of the text.

David Myatt  
1993

### **Notes on Performance**

The language of Aeschylus - particularly in the Choral Odes - is flowing and expressive. It is not what was the language of 'everyday' speech and Aeschylus often seems to invent language in an attempt to express his meaning - compound words; omitting the article.

Often on a first reading or hearing, the sometimes complex method of construction Aeschylus uses may cause one to 'lose the thread' of meaning if one is inattentive - and Aeschylus certainly repays attention.

In my translation, I have striven to express something of the kind of vitality found in Aeschylus - to try and re-present the poet in another language which is not, like Greek, an inflective one. At the same time I have tried to keep his meanings, images and metaphors as I find them. In performance, some of the seeming complexities of the Choral Odes can be overcome by different members of the Chorus speaking different lines. Occasionally, when such a division is required, I have indented the text of the translation and this often follows the strophic patterns of the Greek.

Sometimes, wordless cries of horror or woe are appropriate: at the beginning of line 1100 for example, and at line 1114. At lines 1072 and 1076 Cassandra makes an 'invocation' to Apollo - a series of sounds rather like an incantation. In performance, the loud, repetitive chanting of certain 'vowel sounds' would suffice - e.g. "I-A-O! I-A-O! followed by the chanting of the name of the god, Apollo.

**Dramatis Personae:**

Watchman

Chorus (of Argive Elders)

Clytaemnestra

Herald

Agamemnon

Cassandra

Aegisthus

**Scene:** *The dwelling of Agamemnon at Argos. Near the dwelling stands a statue of Apollo.*

o o o

## Agamemnon

### Watchman:

Again I have asked the gods to deliver me from this toil,  
This vigil a year in length, where I repose  
On Atreidae's roof on my arms, as is the custom with dogs  
Looking toward the nightly assembly of constellations  
And they who bring to mortals the storm-season and the summer:  
Those radiant sovereigns, distinguished in the heavens  
As stars when they come forth or pass away.  
And still I keep watch for the sign of the beacon,  
The light of the fire which will bring report of Troy,  
10 Announcing it is captured. For such is the command  
And expectation of that woman with a man's resolve.

So I have a restless night and dew upon my couch,  
With no dreams being visited upon me -  
Since it is Fear and not Sleep who stands beside me,  
Making it unsafe for Sleep to close my eyes -  
And when I deem to sing or to chant  
Some song as a prepared cure against Sleep,  
Then I grieve, lamenting the misfortune of this family  
Whose nobility lacks the perfection it possessed before.

20 But may it be my fortunate fate to be delivered from this toil  
By that fire, which announces fortune, becoming visible in the darkness.

[The bonfire Beacon is seen, blazing]

Hail to that blaze, which makes night into day

With its light! And there will be an appointing of dancers

In Argos in their multitude because of this favourable event!

Awake! Awake!

To the Lady Agamemnon I give this loud signal

That she may swiftly arise from her bed and for her family

With ululation for this blazing auspicious omen

Raise her voice! For indeed the citadel of Ilion

Has fallen, as the bonfire most clearly declares. As for myself, I shall open the celebrations.

And I shall count the fortunate throw by my Lord

As mine, since I am cast as a triad of six by my beacon-watch.

Therefore, let it be that when he of the friendly hand arrives,

That my own hand is grasped by that Master of this dwelling.

As to other things - I am silent. Upon my tongue a great weight

Will be placed. But this dwelling itself - were it given a voice -

Would surely speak. As to my own intent:

To those who know, there is a speaking;

To those who do not know, a concealment.

[Exit Watchman, Enter Chorus]

Chorus:

It is the tenth year since that mighty accuser of Priam,

Lord Menelaus, and Agamemnon -

They of that double-throne and double-realm given by Zeus

Who thus honoured the stalwart pair, those sons of Atreus -  
Went, with an Argive fleet of a thousand,  
From this land as avenging warriors  
With a mighty war-cry from their hearts  
50 As vultures afflicted by their offspring being lost  
And who, high over the nests, circle around -  
Their wings the oars which move them -  
Since those young, laboured-over in the nest, are gone.

But one of Apollo or Pan or Zeus hears the lofty  
Sharp cries of the loud lamentation of those resident alien birds  
And sends forth an avenging Fury against the offenders.  
60 Thus were those sons of Atreus sent forth  
By mighty Zeus, guardian of hospitality, against Alexander  
On account of that woman who has had many men.

And many would be the limb-wearying combats  
With knees pushed into the dirt  
And spears worn-out in the initial sacrifice  
Of Trojans and Danaans alike. What is now, came to be  
As it came to be. And its ending has been ordained.  
No concealed laments, no concealed libations,  
70 No unburnt offering  
Can charm away that firm resolve.

But I of the aged flesh was exempt  
And so, left behind by those defenders, stay here -  
Holding onto my staff with a strength equal to that of a child.  
For that young marrow which reigned within the breast



Is the equal of an old man's - and Ares is not at his post.

80 Thus, he of great Age, his foliage drying up

And no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels,

Wanders - appearing a shadow in the light of day.

[Clytaemnestra is seen, silently making offerings]

But you, the daughter of Tyndareus, royal Clytaemnestra,

What necessity, what that is new, what knowledge

Or message persuaded you to send around for incense to be burnt?

For all the gods who support this community -

Those above, the chthonic,

90 The celestial and of the Agora -

Are given gifts in abundance on their altars.

And from one place to another, flames rise up

To the celestial heights,

Anointed with sacred oil -

Soothing, unblemished and soft -

A libation from the royal sanctum.

Tell me of these things, if it is fitting

And proper - and consent to being healer of what divides me.

100 That which now brings to me a bad judgement

And then, from a sacrifice, a pleasing revelation,

A hope, to repel the numberless thoughts:

The affliction which feeds on my life.

I have the mastery to invoke those commanding men,

Of auspicious omen and mature -

For still the numen of the gods is with me,  
Giving conviction, a strength to my choral-dance which grows with my age  
Of how the double-throned might of the Achaeans,  
The vigour of Hellas commanded by a common reason,  
Were conveyed with avenging hands and spears  
To the land of the Teucri by those fierce birds -  
The Chieftain of birds of prey to Chieftain of Ships,  
A black one and one with white back -  
Manifesting near the tent-pole and, by the spear-throwing hand,  
Settling, all-transfixing,  
To feed on hares who, overburdened by offspring within,  
120 Were stricken because last in the race.

Even though it is a skilful victory - say a lament!

Thus the worthy prophet of warriors, beholding those two,  
Dismembering hares, saw the doubly-resolved sons of Atreus  
Commanded by those Chiefs. And he spoke this of that omen:  
The citadel of Priam, by this going forth, finally captured  
All the fortifications;  
Most of its folk acquired, enslaved - by a purging Fate  
130 Subdued.

Only let no dislike from a divinity cover-up  
This great mouth for Troy by striking first these assembled warriors!  
For Artemis - the respected one - lamenting, is hostile  
To those winged hunters of her father  
Sacrificing the unborn young and their fearful bearer:  
For she loathes this eagle-feast.

Even though it is a skilful victory - say a lament!

140 The Fair-One is good-natured toward

{ The young who cannot follow the hunting lion,

And the breast-loving sucklings of all

Who rule in the wilds are pleasing to her.

Thus it should be asked that this prediction is fulfilled -

For though auspicious, this bird-omen could be false. }

So make invocations to the healing Paeon

That she does not cast her breath against the Danaans

Causing delay by holding the ships so they cannot sail

150 So that a second sacrifice beyond what is customary is required

An uneaten one -

Constructing a quarrel for those joined in planting,

With no man respected,

Another straightening, a waiting terrible

Cunning ruler of a dwelling:

A Frenzy seeking retribution for a child.

Such were the things Calchas called forth -

Of great advantage to and fated for, the ruling family -

From the manner of those birds.

And this has that same sound:

Even though it is a skilful victory - say a lament!

160 Whenever that being came to be, if the name Zeus

Is pleasing, then by that I so call him.

I do not possess a model -

When I reflect upon the whole - except Zeus  
If this foolish thing, the burden of Thought, is indeed  
To be really taken from me.

There is nothing of that powerful being who existed before  
Who, replete with boldness, fought anyone:  
170 Of how he came to be, nothing can be told.  
And the one produced after that, departed  
Following a triad of combats.

If anyone, from reasoning, exclaims loudly that victory of Zeus,  
Then they have acquired an understanding of all these things;  
Of he who guided mortals to reason,  
Who laid down that this possesses authority:  
'Learning from adversity'.

Even in sleep there trickles through the heart  
180 The disabling recalling of the pain:  
And wisdom arrives regardless of desire,  
A favour from daimons  
Who have taken the seats of honour, by force.

Thus it was with that most respected leader  
Of the Achaean ships -  
With no rebuke for any prophet,  
His breath the same as that of the Fortune which struck him  
When the urns were emptied without sailing,  
His Achaean warriors wearied  
190 With holding what was opposite to Chalcidos  
From where the foam returned to Aulis -

And who, while that breath arrived from Strymon,  
Were badly at rest, hungry, anchored wrongly,  
Men crowded together, careless with anchoring ropes and the ships themselves:  
There a long while, a double length  
Which wore out and blunted the vigour of Argos.

200 And then of another remedy - more grievous  
Than those injurious storms - did the prophet  
Shrilly cry to those leaders:  
Calling upon Artemis so that those sons of Atreus,  
Striking the ground with their staffs,  
Could not hold their tears.

Then the elder of those Lords, spoke - saying these things:

Not to yield on this would be a hard Fate,  
But to slay my child - she who honours our dwelling - is hard, also:  
210 A gushing near the altar, from the slitting of a virgin's throat,  
To pollute a father's hand.  
Which of those is without injury?  
How could I live - a deserter from a ship,  
Having failed in my duty to my comrades?  
For, to stop the winds, their desire  
Above all desires is to offer in sacrifice  
The blood of a virgin. So I call upon Themis  
For what is best, to be.

But when he had put on that yoke of destiny  
He breathed out changing reasons - disrespectful,  
220 Without reverence, and profane.

Thereafter, his understanding lost, his judgements  
Were excessively bold.

For mortals are given courage, their discernment harmed,  
When the first injury is a hard deceiving blow.

So he dared

To become the sacrificer of his daughter

To aid a battle to avenge a woman

By so consecrating the ships.

Her warning of 'Father!', her supplications,

Her virgin state - were counted as nothing

230 By those commanders lusting for battle.

After invocations, her father ordered the servants

To lift up and place upon the altar - like a yearling goat -

She who with all her passion had bent down

To grasp his robe,

And to place a guard upon her beautiful lips -

To prevent a sound from bringing misfortune to the family -

By the power of a strong bridle making her without a voice.

Then, as she poured to earth that which stained her garment,

So at each sacrificer she cast from her eyes

240 Arrows of lamentation:

As if she were pre-eminent within a painting

With a desire to speak,

As often at her father's good feasts

In the male dining-room she had, in song:

When - undeflowered, with her pure voice,

Honouring her beloved father -

She had with the third libation pleasingly sang  
A paeon for good fortune.

I did not see, and do not speak of, what followed these things.

But the art of Calchas was not so incomplete:

250 The goddess, Judgement, favours someone learning from adversity.

But I shall hear of what will be, after it comes into being:

Before then, I leave it,

Otherwise, it is the same as a premature grieving.

Yet what does arrive, will be clear and align with those things.

May what is after what is now, be a favourable outcome -

As desired by the one left to protect these defences,

She closest to the fatherland of Apia.

Honouring your authority, Clytaemnestra, I am here:

For it is customary to respect the leader's woman

260 When the throne is left empty by the man.

If what you have learnt is not something good -

That you so make offerings for a welcome message, of hope -

Then I have the good judgement to hear it, and also not be envious of silence.

Clytaemnestra:

It is often said that it is Dawn,

Born from her mother, Night, who brings welcome messages.

For you will learn of a joy greater than any you hoped to hear of:

The Argives have captured the citadel of Priam!

Chorus:

What do you announce? In my disbelief, your words fled from me.

Clytaemnestra:

Is this speaking clearly? - Troy is Achaean property

Chorus:

270 Joy comes out from within me, bringing with it tears!

Clytaemnestra:

Your eyes reveal your good judgement.

Chorus:

But - what sign have you? And do you trust such a thing?

Clytaemnestra:

Certainly, I do - unless I am being tricked by a god.

Chorus:

Do you honour what is rightly yielded to - a portent in a dream?

Clytaemnestra:

I have no belief in what I receive when my reason is asleep.

Chorus:

Has then an oracle - not from augury - gladdened you?



Clytaemnestra:

Would you tarnish me with the reasoning of a young girl?

Chorus:

Then - how long has it been since the citadel was ravaged?

Clytaemnestra:

I say within that night whose child is this Dawn.

Chorus:

280 But who is the messenger who is so swift?

Clytaemnestra:

Hephaistos, bringing forth from Ida a radiant blaze:

A courier sent here to light bonfire after bonfire.

First, Ida to the rock of Hermes at Lemnos

And then, from that isle, the great bonfire third in line

On Zeus' mountain at Athos received he

Who on his back high over the sea

Conveyed that pleasing pine-torch of the strong flame:

Its golden light another sun,

Its blaze passing on the message to the towers of Makistos.

290 But he did not stop and neither did he - since there was no reason -

Let sleep triumph over him and so let go of his role as messenger.

Thus to the streams of Euripus from afar came the bonfire's radiance,

A sign to the watchmen of Messapios:

And, as the messenger passed on by them, they answered,  
Raising a fire from their pile of gnarled wood.

The torch, vigorous and far from extinguished,  
Bounded over the Asopian plain

To the rocks of Cithaeron as bright as the moon

So that the one waiting there to begin that fire, jumped up:

300 And those guards, praising this torch conveyed from afar,  
Lit a fire greater than any I have spoken of before.

Then, the torch was rushed over lake Gorgopis

To reach the peak of Goat Mountain -

Rousing there a fire-ritual not for some favour

Where without envy of its might the kindled fire sent upwards

A great beard of flame -

And so on and over, beyond where the Saronic channel

Reflects the cliffs, onwards and blazing!

Then, rushing on, it then reached the summit of Spider's rock

And so approached the watch-towers of this town.

310 Thence - to the roof of the Atreidae here - rushed

What had not been without a father since that fire at Ida:

That torch, there!

Thus, willingly, were the functions of those who race with torches,

One after the other, fulfilled in succession

By he who, being first and last, was the victor.

I say to you, by such a sign and means

Did my man pass the message out of Troy to me.

Chorus:

My lady - later, I will invoke the gods,  
But I am so with wonder at hearing what you said  
That if you would continue, and speak again, it would be agreeable.

Clytaemnestra:

320 On this day, the Achaeans possess Troy -  
With, I deem, within the citadel a clashing of cries of war.  
For if, into the same urn, oil and vinegar are poured,  
There would be no calling them companions, since they keep apart.

Thus apart are those seized and they who overwhelmed -  
Giving voice to how both of those fortunes arose.  
As those - casting themselves down near the bodies  
Of husbands, brothers, sires,  
The young of their elders - who, from a neck no longer free,  
Bewail the fate of those loved ones.

330 While those others, following the toil of battle, wander in the night,  
Hungry, for a meal of whatever the citadel contains,  
Stationing themselves - with nothing to mark their share -  
As if each one had drawn his lot by chance.

Thus, in spear-taken dwellings,  
They now abide - delivered, as from an unlucky daimon,  
From the open air with its frost and dews,  
To sleep the whole night with no guard.

If they conduct themselves properly toward the guardian gods of the folk

Whose land they have seized - and the abodes of those gods -

340 Then those who have seized may not be seized in return.

So let not what first attacks those warriors be a desire

To plunder what they should not - a victory for profit;

For they require protection when returning to their homes

After turning around for the second leg of their journey.

And should the warriors arrive without being bereft of their gods,

There is the injury done to those killed, who are watching:

If no sudden bad fortune arise.

Such are the things one hears from me - a woman.

But one will see, with no division of opinion, the best superior

350 For that is the benefit I have chosen, from many honourable things.

Chorus:

My lady, with the reasoning of a man, you express good judgement.

Hearing of those signs you trust

I will prepare myself so I can, fittingly, speak with the gods.

For, with no dishonour, this is their reward, earned by our labour.

[Exit Clytaemnestra]

You, Zeus our Chief, and Nox, our companion -

Mistress of the mighty cosmos

Who cast over the Trojan towers a covering net

Such that neither the full-grown nor any young were beyond the limits

360 Of Misfortune's all-taking enslaving vast trawl.

This act was yours, Zeus - you who are honoured

As the mighty guardian of hospitality:

You who long ago at Alexander drew your bow  
Such that neither before the mark nor toward the stars  
Would these arrows be hurled, in vain.

They can say they have a wound from Zeus:  
Such is manifest from the marks he has left.  
He chose, he acted. Someone denied

370 That the gods deem it worthy to concern themselves with mortals  
Who trample upon what, being untouchable, brings delight.  
But such persons, have no proper respect.  
Yet their descendants are revealed  
By the breath of Ares as lacking courage -  
Proud instead of fair -  
Their abodes excessively overflowing  
Beyond what is for the best.

For unharmed is the one  
Who rightly reasons that what is sufficient, 380 Is what is allotted to him.  
For there is no protection  
In riches for the man of excess  
Who stamps down the great altar of the goddess, Judgement,  
In order to hide it from view.

But vigorously endures Temptation -  
That already-decided daughter of unbearable Misfortune.  
And all remedies are in vain.  
Not concealed, but conspicuous -  
A harsh shining light -  
Is the injury.

390 For, like bad bronze  
Struck and rubbed, he becomes blackly-covered  
As is the customary practice {as a boy  
In pursuit of flying game}  
Laying upon the folk an unbearable affliction.

But not one of the gods hears the supplications:  
Instead, they take down those persons  
Who, lacking fairness, turn their attentions to such things.  
And such a one was Paris -

400 Who, visiting the clan of those sons of Atreus,  
Insulted them - their hospitality - by stealing a woman.

Thus - leaving behind her people: the tumult of shields,  
Of assembling cohorts and of loading weapons upon ships  
She brought to Ilion for her ransom, ruin!  
Proud beyond pride, with ease she passed through the gates.  
And there was much sighing

Among those prophets of the clan who spoke:

410 Alas for this clan! - and its leaders!

Alas for that union - and the path to that lover of men!  
There stands he - silent, curseless in his dishonouring  
Who knows that she whom he enjoyed, has deserted him.  
And, desiring what is overseas,  
The opinion shall be - a ghost rules this clan.

Thus will those skilful shapely statues  
Be hated by that man for their beauty  
Since, lacking in eyes,

All the passion is gone.

420 And a dream-revelation of her returning, weeping,

Will he believe - bringing him a moment's joy:

For it is momentary - as when one believes one beholds what is fortunate -

The vision which slips through the arms, and is gone: not lingering

As those flights which accompany sleep's journeys.

And, at family altars, there was a grieving such as his.

Yet what is, goes beyond what then was:

Since - for those many others who, together, rushed forth from this land of Hellas

430 There is mourning, courageously borne,

Perceptible in every one of their dwellings.

And many are touched by anger.

For, indeed, those whom they sent forth

Were known to them - yet, instead of a man,

Armour and ashes have returned

To each of those families.

And Ares - exchanging bodies for gold

And holding his scales among the combat of spears -

440 Has, from Ilion by his fire

Conveyed to their loved ones a painful lament - that heavy dust

He had exchanged for their men: ashes, stuffed into easily-stowable urns.

Thus do they grieve for those warriors, rightly speaking

Of how that one excelled in combat

And of how another honourably fell amid the killing

"On account of that foreign woman".

That is what some whisper, growling.

450 And, because of this creeping pain, there is resentment  
Against those sons of Atreus: they who were the first to accuse her.  
Yet there are others who, around those ramparts,  
Are encased by that Ilian soil  
Which covers-up their bodily beauty  
And which - since they are enemy occupiers - will conceal them.

Now, rudely do folk talk in their anger -  
Of payment a curse delivered by the people.  
And I remain here, listening,  
460 Anxious, in the darkness of night.  
For the gods are not unobservant  
Of those who have slaughtered many:  
In due measure, there is a dark Avenger  
For he who attains fortune without fairness -  
A reversal of fortune, a life rubbed away  
And obscured. And, becoming unknown,  
No one defends him. To over-step the bounds of praise  
Is rude - and sent forth to their eyes  
470 Is a thunderbolt from Zeus.

Prosperity without hostility is my preference:  
I am not a destroyer of clans  
So therefore may I never be captured,  
To behold a life of subservience to foreigners.



With that beacon-fire - its welcome message -

A rumour hastily passed through the clan:

But does anyone know whether it is true

From the gods - or whether it is false?

Whose reason is so injured, or so childish,

480 That his heart is set on fire by a sudden fiery signal

And then is sick when the news is changed?

It is shown by a woman's spear

That they approve of what is graceful

Rather than what gleams.

Easily captivated, the female boundary is swiftly trespassed upon,

And swiftly-fated to die is that fame which a woman bestows.

We shall soon learn about those light-bearing torches,

490 That exchanging of fire, and the beacon-watching -

That is, whether they are real, or whether that light, pleasurable,

Arriving in some dream, deceived the reason.

For I behold, coming from the shore, a Herald

Shaded by sprigs of olive. And, for me, the testimony of that mud,

Sister to and bounded by the dry dust,

Is that he will not lack a voice, and neither will he -

Setting alight mountain wood - signal us with the smoke of a fire

But will either utter the words most delightful for us

Or ... - but what is the opposite of this is displeasing to speak of.

500 To what has, favourably, been seen, let what is favourable to us, be added.

Whomsoever makes invocations other than for this clan,

May the crop that is his reason, fail.

[Enter Herald]

Herald:

I hail my fatherland - this Argive soil!

In this, the tenth moon of the year, I have returned!

One of my expectations, attained - after a multitude shattered!

For I never boasted that, here, on this Argive soil

I would die, obtaining a most agreeable fate - a funeral feast!

I salute this soil, I salute this sun-light

And Zeus, supreme over this land - and also he who mastered that Serpent:

510 May you no longer cast forth at us arrows from your bow!

Sufficient, by the banks of the Scamander, was your hostility:

Now, therefore, be our defender and Champion,

Lord Apollo. You gods of combat -

I speak to you all - and to my protector,

Hermes, the Heralds' comrade whom we Heralds respect,

And to the Heroes, our escort: be friendly, again,

And welcome those warriors who have survived the war.

I greet that dwelling which sheltered my own Chief,

Those seats of honour, those daimons in opposition to the sun

520 Who perhaps long ago looked brightly upon him -

Fittingly receive our Chief, who has been greatly delayed.

For returning to you carrying with him through the night a blazing fire

To be shared among you all - is our Lord, Agamemnon!

Therefore, properly greet him - for he is worthy,

Since, harrowing-down Troy with that retribution-bringing

Spade of Zeus, he levelled-down their earth:

Unseen are the altars and the shrines of their gods

With every seed of that soil utterly destroyed!

He who placed a yoke upon Troy -

530 That man with a lucky daimon, the elder son of Lord Atreus -

Is returning! Now, after such things, he is the mortal who most deserves

A reward. For neither Paris, nor they who belonged to his clan,

Can boast that a deed of theirs surpassed their adversity.

The penalty for the pillage and theft was fair -

He lost his booty and completely ruined

His own land with his father's family cut down:

Those sons of Priam have paid twice for their weakness!

Chorus:

Greetings to you - Herald of those Achaean warriors.

Herald:

And greetings to you. Before the gods - I will no longer speak against my death!

Chorus:

540 Did you prepare for this because you loved your fatherland?

Herald:

Indeed. It is because of joy that my eyes are full of tears.

Chorus:

Then the sickness that struck you brought a delight?

Herald:

In what way? If you instruct me, I can master those words.

Chorus:

In that you longed for those who in their turn loved what you did.

Herald:

Are you saying you missed those warriors as they missed this land.

Chorus:

Indeed. So gloomy was my reasoning, that there were many lamentations.

Herald:

How did such faulty reasoning - abhorrent to those warriors - come to be?

Chorus:

Since long ago my remedy for such an injury has been silence.

Herald:

But why? The ruler absent - did someone make you tremble?

Chorus:

550 Indeed - so that, as you mentioned, it would be very agreeable were I to die now.

Herald:

Yes - it has ended well, although the wait was long.

Some things - fortunate happenings - should be spoken of,

Although there are other things to complain about.

Who - except for the gods -

Passes their entire life without any injury at all?

Were I to recount our toil, our bad quarters -

Our scanty relaxations and defective coverings -

What was not allotted to us for part of a day, what things were not moaned about?

Then those other things about that land - and with greater disgust!

For we slept near those hostile fortifications

560 Where, from the heavens and out from the earth of those meadows,

Dews drizzled down upon us, constantly harming us,

Breeding vermin in our body-hair and clothes.

If I told of those bird-killing Winters -

Of how the snows of Ida made them unbearable;

Or of the heat at mid-day, when the sea -

Waveless, windless - rested and fell asleep ...

But why be afflicted by such things? Those labours have been left behind

And left behind by those lying dead:

Their recovery is no longer of any concern to them.

570 Why speak about the count of those who were destroyed?

Why should those who live grieve at Fortune's repeated anger? -

Since there is much to rejoice at in that favourable event!

For we Argive warriors who remain,

Our gain is superior to not outweighed by - our injury,

Because, by this light of day, this boast is just,  
To be rushed far beyond this land and its seas:  
"Argive weapons have at last captured Troy!  
To the gods of Hellas, the spoils -  
Splendid antiquities, staked to their Temples!"

580 On hearing this, there should be eulogies to our clan  
And its leaders, and honour given to he whose favour  
Wrought this - Zeus himself!  
You have the whole story.

Chorus:

I will not deny that yours is the better story.  
For, in the old, what is still virile is the skill to learn.  
But those things are naturally of the foremost concern to Clytaemnestra  
And her family - although, together with them, I could profit.

[Enter Clytaemnestra]

Clytaemnestra:

Long ago, out of joy, was my ululation  
When that first messenger - fiery, nocturnal - arrived,  
Announcing Ilion's capture, its devastation.  
And someone rebuked me by saying: "Does a bonfire  
Persuade you to believe Troy is now destroyed?  
How very womanly - to so extol the heart!"  
Such was the language used to show I was lost!  
  
I, however, made offerings - and, as is the practice with women,

One following another - ululations went on through the clan  
To celebrate this good fortune while, within the shrines of the gods,  
The flames devoured our fragrant incense until they slept.  
So now - what further words do you have for me?  
I shall ask the Chief himself for the whole story,  
600 Honouring and respecting he who is my husband  
By hastening to receive him on his return.  
For what day can a woman behold that is more pleasing  
Than the one when - her man unharmed in battle because of the gods -  
She opens her gates for him? Announce this to my husband  
So that he who is beloved by this clan most swiftly arrives.  
On his return, he will find that the woman of the family has been honourable  
As she was when he left her - a guard-dog for this family,  
Faithful to them, hostile to those badly disposed toward us,  
And in all ways the same, no seal  
610 Having been violated during this long wait.  
I enjoy neither the pleasure of, nor the speaking of rumours by,  
Other men any more than I do tempered bronze.

[Exit Clytaemnestra]

Herald:

A boast such as that - full of revelations -  
Uttered by a woman of breeding, is not disgraceful.

Chorus:

Thus she speaks about herself - you will learn  
To correctly interpret such dignified speech!

But speak to me, Herald, of Menelaus - for I seek to know about him:  
Whether he has returned and whether, uninjured,  
He who is loved in this land journeyed back with you.

Herald:

620 I cannot possibly speak falsely about honourable things  
Since my comrades would reap the results for a long while after.

Chorus:

Why - given your joyful revelation - do you happen to say that?  
For it is no easy to keep secret something which has been opened -up.

Herald:

About that leader, there are no sightings from among those Achaean warriors -  
Of he himself and his ship. This is no false story.

Chorus:

Was he observed going away from Ilion -  
Or carried off from those warriors by that common affliction, a storm?

Herald:

As a master archer, you hit your target,  
Reporting a considerable injury, concisely.

Chorus:

But which - of he being either living or dead -  
Was the rumour among the other sailors?



Herald:

No one has accurate information - no one knows,  
Unless it be Helios, whose nature is to feed the earth.

Chorus:

But tell me - how came that storm to those warriors,  
And what did that wroth from daimons achieve?

Herald:

On a day of good omen it is not fitting for bad announcements  
To be voiced, staining it - on it, only the gods should be given tributes.  
But when a horrible injury is what a messenger to the clan  
Conveys with a gloomy face - of warriors defeated  
640 That, for the clan, a single wound has befallen the folk:  
Many men from many families taken in sacrifice  
By that double-lance beloved by Ares,  
Both of its injurious double-points bloody,  
Then, when one is loaded-down with injuries such as these,  
It is fitting to utter those paeans of the Furies!

Yet when good news which preserves fortunes  
Arrives at a clan favoured with well-being ....  
How to mingle the joyful with the bad, to say that it was  
Not without the wroth of the gods that the storm came to the Achaeans?  
650 For, binding themselves by an oath, those former bitter enemies  
Fire and Sea, showed their trust  
By destroying those unfortunate Argive warriors.  
The treachery of that bad-swelling came at night

For that Thracian breath pushed the ships one against another  
So that their horns struck, damaging them  
With tempest of heavy rain and typhonic-storm -  
The treacherous guardian whirling them away out of our sight.

Then, when Helios came back with the splendour of dawn,  
We beheld corpses growing in the Aegean sea  
660 Achaean men from their wrecked ships.  
As for us, the hull of our ship was unharmed,  
For someone stealthily took us away or interceded for us -  
Not a mortal, but some god who, touching us, steered us.  
Fortuna, to preserve us, willingly placed herself on board  
So that we were neither at anchor - taking in that surging tempest -  
Nor being driven toward the rocky shore.

Then, having escaped Hades at sea -  
In the brightness of day, with no belief in our good fortune  
We wandered for reasons as to our recent misfortunes,  
670 The toil of the warriors, and this bad beating.

Now, if any of them, breathing, has being,  
They will speak of us as destroyed - and why not?  
For we hold to the same presumption about them.

What is best, will be. Now, as to Menelaus.  
First - and before others - expect his arrival.  
That is, if the radiance of Helios can reach him  
And he is alive and healthy by the planning of Zeus -  
Whose will would never be to annihilate that seed.  
There is hope that he shall be with his family again.

680 So much you know - be assured, what you have heard is not false.

[Exit Herald]

Chorus:

Who was the one who - in all ways true - named her?

Was it not someone who is never seen -

With a perception of destiny -

Whose tongue, chancing upon it, bestowed upon she

Of that quarrel-making, battle-producing marriage

The name Helen?

690 Since, fittingly named, she - man-seducing, clan-seducing, ship-seducing -

Leaving her gorgeous web of veils,

Was with the breath of the giant Zephyrus

Navigated away.

And many were the shield-bearing men who hunted her -

Following those unclear marks left by the oars

To that shore of the thriving-leaves at Simois,

Because of those blood-letting Furies.

700 Indeed, it was Ilion who was subjected to the judgement

Frenzy had urged for that rightly-named alliance:

Such followed after a while, for the dishonour done

By that guest - and to Zeus, guardian of hospitality,

Who acted against those who uttered their approval

Of the consummation of that marriage in song:

Those kinsfolk who favoured chanting Hymen's hymn.

But they were taught a different hymn,

710 Those of Priam's venerable clan,  
Full of lamentations: a great groaning  
Calling Paris 'he of that disgusting marriage!'  
But even before this, for a long while,  
That clan was full of lamentations on account of suffering  
Such a waste of their blood.

Even thus there was reared among a family by a man  
A daughter of a lion -  
Breast-loving but left without milk -  
720 Tame at the start of its life, rightly befriended by children,  
Pleasing to their elders,  
Who was often in their arms.  
As is customary with a newly-reared child

Its bright eyes looked upon the hand as it begged  
When its stomach pained it.  
But, later, it showed those habits  
It had from its parents -  
For the delight of those who had reared it was repaid

730 By a ruinous slaughter of sheep  
As it made them, uncommanded, its feast  
And their dwelling was moistened by their blood:  
A grief for their servants who could not do battle with  
That large frequently-killing pest.  
Yet, she reared within that family was appointed by some god  
To offer such sacrifices to Misfortune.

Now, in like manner, I say there arrived at the citadel of Ilion

740 What was considered to be stormless, lacking in gales

A glory of voluptuousness in abundance,

The delicate arrows from whose eyes

Wounded the heart bringing forth desire.

But there was a laying-down-beside, achieving through intercourse

That bitter conclusion:

An inauspicious companion - unlucky for them -

Was, escorted by Zeus guardian of hospitality, hastened toward

Priam's descendants -

A Fury, making that bride to lament.

750 Long ago, an Elder - explaining about mortals - said:

On reaching adulthood, a man with possessions

Acquires offspring, never dying childless!

For from the inheritance of a good fortune

There is born the pain of dissatisfaction.

In opposition to others, I have this odd judgement:

Disrespect after it is sown, will produce more

760 Of the same kind as itself.

But for an open and fair family

There is a succession of agreeable children.

Yet it is usual for an ageing insolence to produce,

Sooner or later in cowardly mortals, a younger insolence.

At the appointed Dawn, there arrives a new envy,

A daimon who cannot be combated because he will not fight:

770 Arrogant, Temple-less - a black Misfortune for the family,

As were its parents.

But the goddess, Judgement, can in truth manifest

In well-incensed dwellings -

A favourable omen for those living there.

Yet when dirty hands gild good fortune with gold,

She turns her eyes away,

Eager to go to the-dutiful,

780 For she has no respect for that ability of the wealthy

To counterfeit praise.

And she sets a limit for everyone.

[Enter Agamemnon, with Cassandra]

I hail my Chief - Descendant of Atreus. -

The destroyer of the citadel of Troy!

How to address you, how to honour you

Without exceeding, without falling short of

The due limits of what is acceptable?

For many are the mortals who, highly esteeming

The appearance of things, go beyond what is fair.

790 Everyone is preparing to grieve for the ill-fated ones,

But not at all suitable to their display of grief is their anger -

And, appearing to be like those who rejoice,

They - lacking laughter - will have to compel their faces.

Yet to he who has a good knowledge of his herd

A person's eyes cannot conceal what is a feeble begging for friendship

Behind a pretence of reasoned good judgement.

But, when you were preparing those warriors

800 On account of Helen - I shall not hide this -

What I wrote about you then was very unrefined,

As not fully giving your reason control:

In spite of courage,

She would be returned with men dying.

Yet now to me - neither perfect in reasoning, nor lacking in friends -

Your work was well-judged and well-completed.

In a while, you through inquiry will have knowledge of

Who has been correct and who outside the proper limits

In their duty to this clan while they waited here.

Agamemnon.

810 It is customary to first greet Argos

And our native gods - they who together with me

Rightly caused our return and our success against the citadel

Of Priam. The gods did not hear from our tongues any pleading -

Yet for man-killing, a destroying of Ilion

Into that blood-stained container with no division of opinion

They cast their votes. While at the opposite container,

Although the hand of Hope came near, nothing filled it.

Even now the smoke of that plundered citadel is a favourable sign:

For the breath of Misfortune is a tempest - a killer

820 And a wind to convey away the ashes that were their abundant wealth!

It is fitting that we frequently recollect our debt to the gods for these things

Since we were successful against that insolent robber

And, on account of that woman, that citadel was laid to rest

By the fierce bite of that newly-born horse - bearing the shields of warriors -

Which, in the season of the Pleiades, leapt forward:

A flesh-eating beast bounding over their fortifications

To gorge itself on the blood of those insolent people!

I stretched out this beginning for the gods;

830 But, as to your judgements on those other matters which I heard:

I recall them, and declare that I will be an advocate for them

For there exist few men who have the breeding

To - far from envying someone's good fortune - actually honour their comradeship.

The poison of bad judgement comes to settle in the heart,

A doubling of the burden of he who is beset by sickness:

He is loaded down by his own injury

And groans when he beholds someone else's good fortune.

I speak from experience, for I am well skilled

In deflecting the familiarity of those shadowy figures

840 Who seem to me to be over-friendly.

The only one unwilling to sail, was Odysseus -

But/we made a bond, and he was prepared to work in harness with me.

And it is thus - whether he be breathing or dead -

That I speak of him.

But as for those other matters relating to the clan and the gods

I shall participate in the debates in the assembly,

And then decide. And - obtaining what is agreeable -

The decision should endure so that what is well, remains so.

Whomsoever needs a healing potion -

By a burning-out or a well-judged cutting-away

850 I shall seek to defeat the sickness of that injury.

Now it is to my dwelling and the family altar



That I go to first salute with my right hand the gods  
Who sent me that distance and who brought me back.  
Since the goddess, Victory, followed me, may she stay constantly with me!

[Enter Clytaemnestra]

Clytaemnestra:

Clansmen - you Argive Elders, here.  
There is no dishonour in me telling you of the nature of my love  
For my man. After a while, that fear  
Which mortals have of something, dies. It was not because others  
Instructed me that I can speak of that bad burden I lived with  
860 While he was that long while near Ilion.  
Primarily, for a lady to be separate from her mate -  
To remain unprotected by family - is a harsh misfortune:  
She hears many harmfully- recurring rumours,  
And, as one arrives, another one also conveys a misfortune,  
The announcement of another more injurious misfortune for the family.  
And, as to wounds, if my man had been struck by as many  
As were the reports which poured into this dwelling,  
One would reckon he had more holes than a net!  
Or, had his deaths been as many as the stories of them,  
870 He would have been a second Geryon, with three bodies -  
Ample up-above, not to mention down-below -  
Boasting of that three-fold cloaking by the earth which he received:  
One death for each and every one of his forms!  
  
It was on account of such harmfully-recurring rumours  
That numerous were the nooses, up-above, that from my neck

Others loosened by taking hold of and restraining me.

Thus it is that there is not, standing here beside me,

The child, Orestes - he who ratified that oath between you and I -

As he should have been. Nor be astonished at this.

880 He is in the care of someone well-disposed toward us: your comrade-in-arms,

Strophius of Phocis. He openly spoke to me about possible trouble -

Of your peril, while near Ilion

And then of a clamouring, leaderless, people

Plotting against us, as it is the nature of mortals

To take advantage by kicking he who falls down.

Such indeed is my defence, conveyed without cunning.

As for me, that rushing Spring of my tears

Has dried up - not a drop remains:

My eyes hurt since I went late to sleep,

890 Weeping, when those your bonfires

For that long while were not used. And, when I did dream,

I would be awakened by the slightest buzzing from a darting mosquito,

Having beheld misfortunes which, for you,

Lasted longer than the duration of my sleep.

But now - having endured all these things, my judgement untouched by grief -

I say that my man, here, has been a hunter for these settlers,

The main-stay securing our ship, the foundation of the pillars

Of our high roof, the only begotten son of a father:

And that land which, against their hopes, navigators see;

900 That most agreeable Dawn beheld after a storm,

A gushing Spring a thirsty traveller -

For there is/always delight in escaping from what is disagreeable.

He is worthy of being so greeted,  
With hostility leaving us, for numerous were those misfortunes  
We hitherto endured. So now, my beloved Lord,  
Step down from that carriage, without placing on the ground  
These - the feet of my Master - which ravaged Ilion.

You servants! Why do you delay? I assigned to you the task of  
Spreading over the ground in his path those coverings!  
910 Directly! - let the way be spread with purple  
So that the goddess, Judgement, can lead him to a dwelling beyond his expectations.  
As to other things - my concern, not once conquered by sleep,  
Shall, with the gods, arrange what is a fitting Destiny.

Agamemnon:

Descendant of Leda - you who kept watch over my dwelling:  
Your speech befitted my absence -  
It was a long while before it ended. It is auspicious if others  
Praise me - what honours are necessary should come from them.  
And also do not give me luxuries fashioned by a woman  
Nor - as is the custom among barbarian peoples  
920 Lower yourself to the ground, gaping at me in awe.  
Neither cause hostility for me by spreading those garments on that path:  
By such things it is fitting to honour a god  
But, to me, the mortal who walks upon such purple robes  
Would never, in any place, be far from dread.

Therefore I ask that you respect me as a man, not as a god:

"With no foot-kissing and also no such robes" -

The rumour, to be shouted out. Not to badly judge things  
Is a great gift - from a god. One's fate is a fortunate one  
If one's life ends, agreeably, in well-being.

930 And I am resolved to always act in such a way.

Clytaemnestra:

Yet speak to me of what is not beyond my understanding.

Agamemnon:

Be assured that I will not be destroyed by "understanding"!

Clytaemnestra:

Did you invoke the gods because you feared doing such things?

Agamemnon:

If it was anything, it was abundant experience that made me know my purpose.

Clytaemnestra:

And Priam? What do you believe he would have done had he achieved these things?

Agamemnon:

It is my certain belief he would have walked upon such robes.

Clytaemnestra:

Then do not now fear any rebukes from mortals.

Agamemnon:

Yet with great vigour, the people will speak.

Clytaemnestra:

But of course! Those who are without enemies also have no one to admire them.

Agamemnon:

940 It is not becoming for a lady to eagerly love battle.

Clytaemnestra:

Perhaps; but he of abundant fortune becomes distinguished when letting others win!

Agamemnon:

And do you value being given an advantage in this contest?

Clytaemnestra:

Be persuaded - if you willingly allow me this, it is you who triumph.

Agamemnon:

Then if it pleases you; swiftly, someone undo these shoes -

These servants my feet have walked on -

So that when I step upon those purple garments of the gods,

No hostile eyes will wound me from afar.

For it is very ignoble for my feet to ruin my family

By spoiling that abundance of woven cloth, purchased by my silver!

950 But no more of such things. Treat this stranger well

When you bring her inside. The gods see he who, in victory,

Is lenient - and they treat him well.

For no one, willingly, wants to be yoked as a slave.

But she - a young bloom, plucked, frequently useful,

A gift from my warriors - has come with me.

But since in that other matter I in listening to you gave way,

I shall walk into our dwelling upon that purple path.

Clytaemnestra:

There exists a sea - can anyone staunch it? -

Where that precious-as-silver purple grows

960 Always to ooze out again, a colouring for garments:

A family, my Lord, has such things given to them by the gods,

And our kinfolk have no experience of having to labour for them.

Yet I would have promised to frequently trample upon garments

Had some oracle pronounced such a thing to our kinfolk

While I was planning to pay for a living being to be brought back.

For, while the root has being, green leaves can come to a family,

Extending it giving shade to a Sirian hunter.

And so you - returning to your family altar

Signalled the arrival of warmth in the storm-season.

970 And, when Zeus from bitter unripe grapes makes wine,

Then in the family there will be a life

Because its man had frequented that abode which his completely his.

Zeus - you who are complete in all things: accomplish my supplication

By letting your concern be for what you may desire to accomplish.

[Exit Agamemnon, followed by Clytaemnestra]

Chorus:

Why this dread, continuing

To hover-over my soothsaying-life, directing it?

And so I prophesy, in song - with no one bidding me,

No one paying me.

980 Why not spit it out? -

As is customary with a badly-understood dream

Which, easily over-powering confidence,

Can seat itself upon the cherished throne of reason.

But it was a long while ago - after those anchor-cables clashed,

With ships beached, and vigour lost -

That those warriors rushed forth to Ilion.

Yet I know from my own eyes

Of their return - I am their witness.

990 And so, although I have no lyre, I sing:

For there is a desire, within me - a self-taught hymn

For one of those Furies,

With nothing at all to bring me

That cherished confidence - hope.

And my stomach is by no means idle -

In fairness, it is from achieving a judgement

That the beat of my heart continues to change.

And so there is this supplication of mine:

For this defeat of my hope to be false

1000 So that, that thing cannot be achieved.

In truth, that frequently unsatisfied goddess, Health,

Has a limit - for Sickness, her neighbour,

Leans against their shared fence;

And it is the fate of the mortal who takes the short-cut

To strike the unseen reef.

And yet if - of those possessions previously acquired  
1010 A fitting amount is, through caution, cast forth by a sling,  
Then the whole construction will not go under -  
Injurious over-loaded as it was -  
Nor will its hull be filled, by the sea.  
Often, the gifts from Zeus are abundant  
And there is, then, from the yearly ploughing,  
A death for famine's sickness.

But if once upon the earth there falls from  
1020 A mortal that death-making black blood -  
What incantation can return it to his arms?  
Not even he who was correctly-taught  
How to bring back those who had died  
Was allowed by Zeus to be without injury.  
Were it not that Fate was ordained  
By the gods to make it fated  
That when more is obtained it is not kept,  
My heart would have been first  
To let my tongue pour forth these things.

1030 But now, in darkness, it murmurs,  
Painfully-desiring, and having no hope of when  
There will be an opportunity to bring this to an end,  
Rekindling the fire of reason.

[Enter Clytaemnestra]



Clytaemnestra:

You - and I speak to you, Cassandra - go within,  
Since it is Zeus who, with no anger, has placed you here  
To share in our family libations, where - with our many servants  
You will stand close to that altar guarding our possessions.

Do not be unreasonable - step down from that carriage;  
1040 For it was once said that even Alcemene's son  
Endured being sold, and the food of servants.  
And even if one's fate does incline toward this necessity,  
There will be many favours from masters accustomed to wealth:  
But they who, unexpectedly, make a useful pile  
Are, in everything, strict and cruel to their servants  
While, from such as us, that which custom has established, is obtained.

Chorus: [to Cassandra]:

It is to you that she has addressed those plain words.  
And, since you are the game Fate decreed would be captured,  
Yield - if you can yield and it is suitable to yield

Clytaemnestra:

1050 If indeed she does not - as is customary with swallows -  
Possess the speech of a barbarian, she is without learning  
For I yielded to reason in addressing those words to her.

Chorus:

Obey her. For what she says is the best thing, for the present.  
Yield - and leave your seat in that wagon.

Clytaemnestra:

I certainly cannot delay, here, outside, by prolonging this.

For, concerning our altar, sacred to Apollo,

Even now the sheep are waiting, before their sacrifice:

As we, who never hoped to obtain such a favour as this.

And so, if you are to perform this - do not, by staying here, delay.

1060 But if you do not receive my words because you do not understand us,

Then - instead of speaking - make some sign with those your foreign hands.

Chorus:

This stranger seems to need a skilful interpreter:

She has the manner of a newly-captured wild-beast.

Clytaemnestra:

She is certainly possessed - and listening to defective reasoning;

She who deserted her newly-captured clan

To come here - and who will not be able to bear the bridle

Until the vigour in her blood has been let out, bubbling!

But - having been thus insulted - I will not excite myself any more!

[Exit Clytaemnestra]

Chorus:

Since I could lament for her, I myself am not angry.

1070 Now, unfortunate one, abandon that carriage,

Willingly accepting the necessity of this change to subjection.

[Cassandra leaves the carriage, to stand near the statue to Apollo]

Cassandra:

I, grieving, make lament to my god!

Apollo! Apollo!

Chorus:

Why this loud lamentation in the name of Loxias?

For he is not among those to whom one laments about misfortune.

Cassandra:

I, grieving, make lament to my god!

Apollo! Apollo!

Chorus:

Yet again her call to her god is inauspicious

For he is not of those who attend to such wailing.

Cassandra:

1080 Apollo! Apollo!

God of settlements - my Apollo!

It was not difficult for me to fail you - again!

Chorus:

Will her prophecies concern her own misfortune?

What a god gives, remains - even with reason conquered.

Cassandra:

Apollo! Apollo!

God of settlements - my Apollo!

To where have you led me? To what manner of shelter?

Chorus:

That of those sons of Atreus. If you had not observed this,

Then it is I who have told you - and you cannot pronounce it false.

Cassandra:

1090 It is of they who detest the gods - they who share a knowledge

Of many treacherous cruel slayings of kinfolk,

With mortals sacrificed and the ground moistened.

Chorus:

This stranger, it seems, has the skilful nose customary among hounds:

And, in seeking blood, she will discover it.

Cassandra:

For I am persuaded by testimony from those who,

Lamenting, were sacrificed as children,

Their flesh roasted and devoured by their fathers.

Chorus:

Although I have been informed of your renown at divination

I am not looking for a prophet.

Cassandra:

1100 I lament - for what is it that someone plans?

What new grief ? What is this great,

Great injury planned for a family -

Difficult to heal, difficult for loved ones to bear,

Whose remedy is far away, in distance?

Chorus:

I myself have no knowledge of these prophecies:

But there are others, which echo through all of the clan.

Cassandra:

What suffering! Will it be accomplished? When the partner, sharing the same bed,

Has been rendered clean by that bathing ...

But how can I tell this ending?

1110 Yet it will be swift - a hand stretched out,

The other hand thrusting forth.

Chorus:

As yet, I do not understand; for now, the enigma

Of these unclear oracles is beyond my cunning.

Cassandra:

I behold ... But - what is this manifestation?

Surely - some trap, from Hades?

But the snare is the one who shared the bed

And who will share the blame for that killing.

Never satisfied with our race, Strife will give loud ululations  
When, by stoning, there is sacrifice!

Chorus:

What Fury is this that you so exhort it to loudly wail  
1120 Against a family? Such words bring me no joy,  
And running toward my heart are those yellow-stained drops  
As when a spear befalls one,  
Achieving with one's life an ending of what is seen:  
For it is swiftly that Misfortune arrives.

Cassandra:

There! - I see it! Remove the cow from the bull!  
Entangling him in his robes, she strikes  
With her black-horned instrument! He falls,  
Into a construction containing water.  
I speak to you of a death by cunning - during a libation.

Chorus:

1130 I cannot boast of a complete knowledge of message from the gods -  
But these resemble ones that are defective:  
For, by means of messages from the gods, something useful  
Is said to mortals, while through defective ones -  
Constructed of many words -  
It is a dread of oracles that tends to be learnt.

Cassandra:

It is my injurious Destiny to suffer misfortune!  
And with loud cries I pour forth this my affliction:  
You brought me here to suffer - but for what?  
For whom? If not to die with someone - for what else?

Chorus:

1140 God-possessed, with frenzied reasoning,  
You loudly cry wordless odes -  
As that song-bird who calls, unanswered -  
For, alas, your reason has suffered:  
You live with an abundance of ills  
As that songstress sighing "Ityn! Ityn!"

Cassandra:

Plaintive was the fate of the songstress!  
For there was placed around her a body bearing wings,  
Pleasing to the gods - and that struggle to be without tears.  
But I await being split-apart by some double-edged weapon!

Chorus:

1150 From where did this god-possession rush upon you  
That you toil so uselessly,  
Drumming-out in song your fear in shrill  
Ill-omened words - almost an ode?  
From where came this method of prophecy  
By giving voice to misfortunes?

Cassandra:

Alas - for that union, that union by which Paris destroyed His friends!

Alas - for those waters of the Scamander that my ancestors drank!

Once, beside your banks, I was nourished - and grew,

To suffer this.

1160 But now, it seems I shall soon be beside the Cocytus

And the shores of Acheron Chanting my prophecies!

Chorus:

With much skill you announced those words -

The youngest among us, hearing them would understand!

And I - am wounded, stabbed bloodily:

For your chanting invokes such painful misfortunes

That I, listening, am disabled.

Cassandra:

Alas - for the toil. the toil of my community,

Now totally destroyed!

Alas - for my father making sacrifice by the fortifications,

Slaying numerous grass-fed cattle!

1170 For they were not a cure to relieve those afflictions

That the clan received as they did.

And, as for me, my fiery foresight shall soon be cast down upon earth.

Chorus:

What you announce follows what went before:

Your faulty judgement is caused



By some over-weight daimon falling upon you  
So that you sing of death-making afflictions.  
But your aim is beyond my cunning.

Cassandra:

Now - no longer giving divine-answers from behind a veil -  
I can be looked at, as is customary with a young woman, recently deflowered:  
1180 Truly radiant, as when Helios in coming forth  
Arrives with his breath - and there is, as is customary with swellings,  
A purging in the sunlight of much greater wounds than this one.  
But no longer will the information I give be enigmatic  
And of the marks of treachery you will be my witness,  
Walking with me as I follow the smell of deeds done long ago.  
For there are Choral-Dancers who never leave that shelter  
They sing displeasing words to what are displeasing sounds.  
Now having drunk mortal blood, they are given more courage  
These revellers who stay in that dwelling:  
1190 And it is difficult to send them away, such is the nature of those Furies.  
For they occupy that abode, chanting the chant  
Of that primal most significant curse -  
Each, separately, telling of their hostility  
For he who violated she who was sleeping with his brother.  
  
Have I missed? Or has this archer hit the mark?  
Or is it that I, at divination - as some lover gushing forth - lie?  
First swearing an oath, bear witness that I know  
The story of the failings of this most ancient family.

Chorus:

How could an oath, that by its nature is constructed to injure,

Come to heal? But I marvel that you -

1200 Who grew up overseas - hit the mark in speaking about another clan..

Cassandra:

It was Apollo - he of oracles - who gave me such work.

Chorus:

Was it that he - a god - was wounded by desire?

Cassandra:

Before now, I was ashamed to speak of it.

Chorus:

Every person who does well has more of luxuries.

Cassandra:

He was a fighter - breathing out much that was pleasing to me.

Chorus:

And, as is the custom, did his exertions lead to you bearing his child?

Cassandra:

In giving my approval for that, I lied to Loxias.

Chorus:

Had you by then been seized by the art of divine inspiration?

Cassandra:

1210 By then, I was giving my oracles concerning everything that afflicted the clan.

Chorus:

Given the rage of Loxias - how is it that you are uninjured?

Cassandra:

Because of my error, no one believed me about anything.

Chorus:

We, however, are of the opinion that your oracles can be trusted.

Cassandra:

Alas - for this misfortune!

Once again, a premonition strangely afflicts me!

Sitting nearby - what began this typhonic storm:

I see them, there, sitting near that dwelling,

Those youngsters - with forms as in some dream

As if killed by those who had cherished them -

1220 Their hands full with that food made from their own flesh,

Organs mixed with entrails: holding a feast to lament for,

Eaten by their father!

Because of this, I say someone plots to avenge:

A lion without strength frequently engaged in copulation,  
Who waited here for the master himself to arrive!  
As for me - a servant is required to carry a yoke.  
But that commander of ships who laid Ilion waste

Does not see as belonging to an insatiable bitch that tongue  
Which spoke and in joy stretched out to him, as is the custom.

1230 Preparing an injurious Fate is this concealed Frenzy -  
Such boldness! - a woman to slay a man!

What kind of thing is she of the loveless bite?

How to chance upon her name? Amphisbaena? Or Scylla

Who, dwelling near rocks, injures navigators?

The mother of Hades making sacrifice who, proudly,

With no truce, fights against her own kin?

And what loud ululations she - in all things bold - will utter

When she triumphs in her fight!

After appearing delighted by that safe return!

But it does not matter if you are not persuaded by this:

1240 What must be, will arrive - and you yourself, being present here,  
Will soon relate in lamentations how my premonition was only too correct.

#### Chorus:

That feasting of Thyestes on the flesh of children

I listened to - and shivered; for a dread holds me

Having heard a disclosure of what no one has fully described.

But as to learning anything else - having run off course, I fell.

Cassandra:

I announce that you will look upon the dead Agamemnon.

Chorus:

Unfortunate one - let your mouth have a rest from invocations!

Cassandra:

The healing-god was not behind those words.

Chorus:

Indeed, unless he is here: but let that not be so!

Cassandra:

1250 You may wish that - but some are concerned enough to kill.

Chorus:

Who is the man who prepares this trouble?

Cassandra:

My revelations must indeed have disabled you!

Chorus:

I did not hear the means whereby someone will achieve that thing.

Cassandra:

And yet I speak Greek very skilfully.

Chorus:

So do those giving oracles at Pytho - but they are difficult to understand.

Cassandra:

Ah! - As for that fire, it falls upon me!

Ah! - That wild wolf, Apollo, is here ...

There - the lioness with two feet who, with her well-bred

Lion absent sleeps with a wolf -

1260 And she will kill me, the unfortunate, for she prepares

A remedy, putting into my reward her own wroth.

With invocations she sharpens her dagger - for a man,

To take revenge with my blood on he who brought me here.

Why then keep this thing for others to laugh at me?

And this necklace of Apollo? And this wand?

You at least I will destroy before I myself die!

Fall - go to your destruction! Thus do I avenge myself on you.

In my place, give someone else an abundance of misfortune!

Behold! It is Apollo himself who takes from me

1270 These vestments of a priestess! And he looked upon me,

Attired in those things, as I was laughed at

Foolishly, by friends, by those undivided in their hostility:

And called names as if I were some wandering teller of fortunes,

Begging, starving and holding out my hands!

And now the god of prophets, exacting from me his gift of prophecy,

Marches me to a death-making event

Where waits not my ancestral altar but a butcher's block -

A striking-down first as the sacrificial offering of hot blood.

Yet the gods will not let us be dishonoured when we die

1280 Since someone will arrive to defend us -

A mother-slaying descendant avenging his father.

A wandering exile, far from his homeland,

Returning to cap the injury done to his kin:

His father - laid out when his back was turned - will bring him.

So why do I - a settler, here - lament aloud?

Since when I first beheld the clan of Ilion

Acting as they did act - with those of the clan who were taken

Delivered up by decision of the gods -

I have acted to go to take upon myself that death

1290 Since, before the gods, a mighty oath will be sworn.

Thus, it is towards these gates of Hades that I speak:

My wish being to obtain a fatal wound

So that without painful convulsions but with my blood gushing forth

To give me an easy-dying, I may close my eyes.

Chorus:

You - greatly unfortunate, who has great skill in your craft -

Your speech was complex. And yet if you truly know

Your own fate, how can you - as the custom with oxen

Driven to the altar by a god - go there with such boldness?

Cassandra:

There can be no escape, my friend, no more delay.

Chorus:

1300 But the person who is last has the advantage of that delay.

Cassandra:

My day has arrived - little is gained by running away.

Chorus:

Then know that such bold judgement will give you strength.

Cassandra:

No one who has a lucky daimon listens to such things.

Chorus:

Yet mortals are pleased if they die well-known.

[Cassandra moves towards the gates of Agamemnon's dwelling, then stops]

Cassandra:

Alas for you, my father! And your noble descendants!

Chorus:

What is it that you so turn around in fear?

Cassandra:

Dreadful! Dreadful!



Chorus:

Why "dreadful"? Unless The Dreaded One has affected your judgement.

Cassandra:

That family reeks of blood-letting slaughter!

Chorus:

1310 It is but the smell of offerings on the family altar.

Cassandra:

It is the same as that which rises from a burial.

Chorus:

What you speak of is no Syrian luxury for that family.

Cassandra:

Now I will go to that family chanting an elegy about the Destiny

Of Agamemnon and me. What I have lived has been sufficient.

My friends:

I am in no way different from a fearful bird, suspicious

Of a bush. Give testimony to this about my dying;

For me, a woman, another woman shall die -

For her man, unluckily-wed, another man will fall.

1320 1 - about to die - you received as a guest.

Chorus:

Unfortunate one! The fate you foresaw causes me to lament!

Cassandra:

I desire to say one more thing - or utter a lament -

About myself- invoking Helios

On this my last day, that the defender of my honour

Is a killer exacting from my enemies what they did from me

Who, easily-overcome, dies a slave.

Alas! - for those concerns of mortals. A lucky fate

Is a shadowy thing that can change: and if an unlucky fate

Strikes, what is written about someone is destroyed by a moistened sponge;

1330 And then there is much more to make lament for.

[Exit Cassandra]

Chorus:

All mortals who do well bring forth Insatiability,

And not one of them, pointing their finger, declares it will be kept out

Of his dwelling, saying: "No longer enter here!"

And thus it is with he whom the Immortal Ones allowed to capture

The citadel of Priam and who arrived at his home, honoured by those gods.

But now if he is to render tribute for ancient bloodshed by others

And by dying for those deaths

1340 Require compensation by more deaths,

Then who among mortals is there, on hearing of these things,

Who would boast that the daimon they were born with

Would do them no harm?

[A cry of pain is heard]

Agamemnon: [from within the dwelling]:

I am grievously wounded - cut, deeply!

Chorus:

[The Leader of the Chorus turns to the other members:]

Quiet!

[He then turns toward the dwelling:]

Who cries "I am cut - grievously hit!"?

Agamemnon:

Yet more! A second wound!

Chorus:

Since it is the Chief who shouts, my belief is that that deed is done.

But let us together, consult, to consider what is without fault.

[The Chorus each speak in turn]

I shall tell you how I understand things:

We shout for assistance - "You people: here, to this abode!"

1350 My opinion is that we swiftly rush in

And charge them with the deed while the sword is freshly dripping.

I agree with your understanding of this matter:

I vote we act! The moment is right! - we should not delay!

I know what it is! This is the first act of those people  
Whose banner is that of some tyrant!

Indeed - because we wait! While we delay, they trample our glory  
Underfoot! Their hands do not rest!

I know I cannot find a good plan to tell you of -  
It is warriors who should make plans for such things.

1360 And I agree with you - since words are not an effective device  
By which the dead may be raised up again.

And shall we then destroy our livelihood by submitting  
To those leaders who have disgraced that family?

That would be unbearable: it would be better to die,  
Such a fate being more acceptable than being ruled by some tyrant!

Are we then taking that cry as a sign,  
Predicting that the man has been killed?

To discuss this matter, it is necessary that we see the evidence:  
Since without seeing the evidence, we are guessing.

[The leader of the Chorus speaks again:]

1370 From all sides, there is an increase in those who approve of that:  
We must see the son of Atreus clearly to confirm how he is.

[The gates open to reveal Clytaemnestra standing beside the bodies of Agamemnon  
and Cassandra]

Clytaemnestra:

Although much of what I said before was for a purpose,  
There was no disgrace in saying it:  
For how else - while preparing hostile things for enemies  
Who appeared to be friends - to set an injurious trap  
Too high to be jumped out of?  
And I did not lack for reasons for this ancient fight  
Where the victory, although delayed, has at last arrived.  
And I remain here, where I attacked - beside my achievement!

1380 Such was my deed - I will not deny it -  
So that he could neither escape from nor ward off his fate.  
As when fishing, there was a complete surrounding:  
A placing-around of an abundant injurious garment!  
And I struck him twice - with two loud cries  
His joints were loosened there, and, as he fell,  
I gave a third as well for the one below the ground,  
Invoking a favour from Hades, preserver of corpses.

Thus he fell - gasping for his life,  
And swiftly spurted forth his sacrificial blood,  
1390 Striking me with dark, wet, crimson drops!  
And my rejoicing was not inferior to when that delightful Zeus-given rain  
Seeded the concealed sheath to bring-forth a new birth!

So things are - and you, Elders of Argos,  
Can rejoice if you do rejoice at this. I myself offer exultant invocations:  
If it is necessary to make a libation over that corpse

Then such a thing is fitting: indeed, more than fitting  
Since so full had he filled his chalice with so many misfortunes  
For his family, that he on his returning had to empty it himself.

Chorus:

I am astonished at your words! Such boldness  
1400 To boast of such things when speaking about your man!

Clytaemnestra:

You challenge me as if I were a woman lacking in reason  
But I, fearless of heart, speak to those who know  
Whether or not your will is to praise or rebuke me.  
Here is my husband, Agamemnon -  
A corpse by that work which this is my right-hand  
Fittingly executed. It is thus that things are!

Chorus:

Woman! What injurious soil-grown edible thing -  
Or what drink drawn from the salt-sea - have you tasted  
That, by such a sacrifice, you place upon yourself the people's curse:  
Set apart, cast out - belonging to no clan  
And mightily hated by this community?

Clytaemnestra:

Now you deem it fitting to exile me from my clan  
And bear the hatred and curses of the people of this community  
Although you then did not oppose that man

Who valued her death no more than if she had been some beast  
From his well-fleeced abundant herds of sheep!  
He sacrificed his own child - she, my beloved,  
Brought forth through my pain - to charm with incantations those  
Thracian storms.  
Should it not have been he who was banished from his native soil  
1420 As payment for that pollution? But, having heard of my work,  
You judge me harshly. As to the threats you have uttered.  
I am ready for all of them: he who can overcome me in a fight  
Will command me, but should the gods accomplish the opposite,  
Your instruction in how to be discreet will have been to late!

Chorus:

Sufficient was your planning, well-thought out your words -  
But it is your reason which will be lost because of that blood-stain:  
Over your face, blood and gore are spattered.  
For it is necessary that you - robbed of your friends -  
1430 Be paid-back, wound for wound.

Clytaemnestra:

Now hear what is just - my oath!  
  
I swear by the goddess, Judgement, that I accomplished this for my daughter -  
And also by Ate and Erinyes for whom I slit his throat.  
Thus could I hope to enter, without fear, that dwelling  
Until Aegisthus makes the fire on my hearth:  
He who has previously been well-disposed toward me.  
For, there, is that not insignificant shield who gave us courage

There lies he who dishonoured this woman,  
He who while near Ilion was the delight of those like the daughter of Chryseis  
1440 And she whom he won by his spear - that observer of omens  
With whom he had intercourse, that prophetess who loyally slept with him  
Even when his ship was under sail at sea!  
And such conduct was not without dishonour!  
For thus things are: he was laid out here while she,  
As is the custom with swans, wailed her last call for her loved one  
While she died, serving me additional dish -  
Sensuous and spicy - because they had been lovers!

Chorus:

If only something, neither excessively painful  
1450 Nor which makes me bed-ridden - some fate - would swiftly arrive  
To convey me to that everlasting endless sleep,  
Since he, our protector, well-disposed toward us, has been tamed  
Having endured much from a woman  
And having that woman end his life.

Helen - you who went beyond what is proper -  
Because of you alone that multitude, that great multitude,  
Lost their lives near Troy!  
Now you have crowned that long-to-be-recalled achievement  
1460 By this blood you cannot wash away -  
For you were in that dwelling,  
You, Strife - who by an affliction vigorously tamed a man!



Clytaemnestra:

Because of these grievous things, no one should invoke a fatal curse upon  
Nor turn their wrath toward, Helen  
As if she was some man-killer who alone destroyed  
The lives of those many Danaan men  
By having wrought such a festering wound!

Chorus:

You - daimon - who has befallen that family  
And those two descendants of Tantalus:  
1470 Your strength is in those women whose natures are the same -  
So strong, you gnaw at my heart!  
And, as is customary among hostile ravens, you stand  
Upon that body, calling your invoking unnatural call!

Clytaemnestra :

What you spoke of knowing is now put right  
By you calling upon the thrice-fed daimon of this family:  
For there was in him a lust to feed on fresh food by sucking new blood  
1480 Before this most ancient affliction was over.

Chorus:

What you praise in indeed for that family  
a mighty and wrathful daimon -  
But it is an ill-omened praising of a still unsatisfied, injurious misfortune.  
It is Zeus who causes everything, who cultivates all things -  
For what can mortals achieve without Zeus?

What of this has been done without some god?

1490 My Chief - how may I make lament for you?

What can I say so that others can judge our friendship?

But you are there - within what that spider wove,

Having breathed out your life: killed, with no respect shown,

By that ignoble embrace -

Tamed by death through a cunning hand

With a double-edged weapon

Clytaemnestra:

So you affirm that it was me who did that work?

But do not add to those words that it was me who was the mistress of Agamemnon

Since the wife of this corpse presents herself here

As that most ancient fierce Avenger.

It is Atreus, he is of that cruel feast,

Who, in payment for that, has added to his young victims

This adult one.

Chorus:

Is there anyone who will bear witness

That you are blameless in this killing?

But - how can that be? Perhaps, because of that one's father,

The Avenger might have helped you -

Dark Ares compelled

1510 By the blood flowing from those sharing the same seed

To go to where he will give satisfaction

For those stains left behind after those boys

Had been made into food.

My Chief - how may I make lament for you?

What can I say so that others can judge our friendship?

But you are there - within what that spider wove,

Having breathed out your life: killed, with no respect shown,

By that ignoble embrace -

Tamed by death through a cunning hand

1520 With a double-edged weapon.

Clytaemnestra:

But do not suppose that his killing was ignoble

For did he not by his cunning set Misfortune upon this family?

Since he to that young shoot which I raised -

My Iphigenia, of the many laments -

Did what merited him suffering what he did,

Then he cannot, before Hades, make great boasts,

Having been killed by a sword-wound to pay for what *he* began!

Chorus:

1530 I lack a plan - robbed of reasons,

I am divided about the right means:

What to do now this family has fallen?

I fear blood thundering-down during a storm

Which will shake this settlement!

The drizzle has ceased - and for another deed of injury,

Fate sharpens another sword/for the goddess, Judgement.

Gaia! - Would that you had consumed me

1540 Before I was shown him laid low while in his silver-walled bath!

Who will bury him? Who will give his eulogy?

Will you - having killed your own man - dare

To make lament for his life, unfairly granting him

Such a thankless favour for his mighty deeds?

Who over his cairn will utter the praises

Of he who, descended from a god, was a hero?

1550 Who, through such a labour, will reveal his heart?

Clytaemnestra:

It is not fitting for you to trouble yourself with such concerns.

It was by me that he fell, that he died -

And so I shall bury him, with no family lamenting him,

Although his daughter, Iphigenia - as she ought to -

Will welcome her father

After he is ferried over the swift-flowing Acheron,

Embracing him with a kiss.

Chorus:

1560 This rebuke has arisen because of the other rebukes:

And it is difficult to choose which side to fight on.

He who carried things away, is carried away - having killed, he has paid;

For this remains, while the aeon of Zeus remains:

There is adversity in deeds, for that is his law.

Who in that family can expel the seed of that curse?

For Misfortune has fastened herself onto that brood.

Clytaemnestra:

Until now, what the oracle revealed has been followed:

1570 And so therefore I am willing to make a pact with the daimon of Pleisthenes.

That I - difficult to bear though this is - be content with things as they are.

While on his part, he goes from this family

To another brood to waste them away by kin killing kin.

A small share of my property is entirely sufficient for me

If I remove from this dwelling this kin-slaying frenzy.

[Enter Aegisthus, with an armed escort]

Aegisthus:

Hail! To this well-judged light of this day which has brought me satisfaction!

Now I can reveal how mortals are protected

By those gods who - from above this land - behold our afflictions,

Who see - in a robe woven by the Furies -

What is pleasing to me: a man lying here

Who has paid for what the hands of his father planned.

For when Atreus, the father of him, there, ruled this land -

And I shall speak clearly - he who was my father

Disputed the authority of his own brother

Who exiled him from his own clan and family.

But, returning to the family-altar to be purified of his stain,

The unfortunate Thyestes found his fate was so secure

That his blood was not shed upon his native soil.

1590 Instead, Atreus - he of an unlucky god and father to that person there -

Was a host who had a greater purpose than friendship

For he, pretending to be well-disposed to my father on that festive meat-day,

Placed before him a feast made from the flesh of his children.

The toes and the fingers of the hands

He had ground down to spread over what he, sitting alone,

With no clues, unknowingly received, and so ate

What was - as you behold - unsafe food for his kin.

And when he did know of his inauspicious deed,

He cried out - and leant forward to vomit out the bloody sacrifice,

1600 Invoking upon the descendants of Pelops an unbearable fate,

Kicking over that meal-table as he rightly made his curse:

"May the whole clan of Pleisthenes perish!"

It is because of this that you behold that person there, dead

And only fair that I contrived his killing

For, with my unfortunate father, I - his third -

Then small, enwrapped in swaddling clothes, had been driven out with him

And, having grown up, was brought back here by the goddess, Judgement.

For, even while aboard, I fastened myself to that man

And put-together this whole cunningly-devised plan.

1610 Thus I can now die, content -

Having killed him, there, ensnared by the goddess, Judgement!

### Chorus:

Aegisthus! I cannot respect someone who is insolent about his treachery!

For you say you willfully killed this man

And alone devised such a woeful death.

I affirm that your head will not escape from the judgement

Of the community who will, be assured, curse you with their stones!

Aegisthus:

You who say such things sit lower down, at the oars,  
While it is those on the steersman's seat who command the ship!  
You will come to know how grievous it is for someone  
1620 As old as you to be taught - when ordered to be reasonable!  
For bonds and the pains of hunger are - even for the old -  
Most excellent teachers of the powers of reason!  
Can you who see not see this?  
You should not kick at your masters, for in trying to strike, you will be hurt!

Chorus:

You woman! You who waited here when others went to war -  
Who only then dishonoured the wife of a Chief! -  
Was it you who contrived the death of that warrior Chieftain?

Aegisthus:

Those words will be the genesis of your lamentation!  
The sounds you make are the opposite of those of Orpheus  
1630 For whereas he through his delightful voice could persuade anyone,  
You - having angered us by your infantile howlings -  
Will be persuaded by us, revealed as tame when we overpower you!

Chorus:

You could never be King of the Argives!  
You who although contriving that death  
Could not even do the killing yourself!

Aegisthus:

Such deceit was clearly for his woman  
Since I as an old clan rival was not trusted.  
However, by his wealth I will seek to rule this clan,  
And those who do not obey me  
1640 I shall harshly bind - unlike an unharnessed  
Barley-fed horse! - and house them, hungry,  
In unfriendly darkness, to watch them weaken!

Chorus:

Was it because of your cowardly spirit  
That you did not yourself kill that man, but let a woman -  
To so defile our soil and our native gods -  
Do your killing?  
Orestes! Do you behold the light of day?  
Can you - by the grace of Fortuna - return here  
To become the conqueror who slays these two?

Aegisthus:

Since you deem to act and speak so - your learning will be swift!

Chorus:

Comrades! Prepare for battle! This deed is not far off!

Aegisthus: [to his guards]

Prepare! All of you - draw your swords in readiness!



Chorus:

I also am ready: I am not afraid to die!

Aegisthus:

We accept your words "To the death!" You have chosen your fate!

Clytaemnestra [To Aegisthus]:

My dearest - let us not do any more harm,  
For to reap these many would make it an unlucky harvest:  
Injure them just enough, but do not stain us with their blood.  
You Elders - go to your families, as fate decrees,  
Before, by acting, you suffer in vain. What was done, was necessary.

If of those troubles this should be a remedy, accept it:  
1660 An unlucky wound from the grievous claw of some daimon.  
Such is the advice of a woman - should you deem to accept it.

Aegisthus:

But is his foolish tongue to blossom before me  
By him casting forth such words - testing his daimon -  
And being deprived of that learning of reason for so abusing my authority?

Chorus:

Not one of us Argives would submit to a coward!

Aegisthus:

Some day, after this, I shall get you!

Chorus:

Not if a daimon should command Orestes to return here.

Aegisthus:

I know that men in exile feed themselves on hope.

Chorus:

Continue, fatten yourself, defile what is fair - while you can!

Aegisthus:

1670 Be assured that I will exact payment from you for this stupidity!

Chorus:

You boldly strut about - as a hen beside its cock!

Clytaemnestra [To Aegisthus]:

Have no regard for such idle howlings! It is you and I

Who have the power to make where we live favourable for us.

---

**cc David Wulstan Myatt 1993, 2013**

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

---

# SOPHOCLES

## Oedipus Tyrannus

A Translation  
by  
DW Myatt

### Preface

The main reason for this new translation of the *Oedipus Tyrannus* - Oedipus The King - is the desire to produce a dynamic and interesting version which is as accurate as any non-literal translation can be and which thus reflects, as far as any translation can, the spirit of the original.

The original is one of the masterpieces of European literature, and indeed of European culture, something hardly evident from some other translations. Part of the beauty of Sophocles is his direct simplicity of language - and, given the resources of the English language, it should be possible to suggest this in a translation without, however, descending to the level of the trite and the banal as some recent translators have done in their attempts to 'modernize' and/or make the story seem 'relevant'.

In the present translation, I have tried to combine a simplicity and directness of expression with a fidelity to the images of the original, as well as rendering as best I could the most important Greek concepts in a Hellenic rather than a modern, abstract, way. As with the original, the language/style/syntax I have employed is not that of 'everyday' speech, but as to whether it achieves the desired simplicity and effect, particularly when spoken, the reader must judge.

The text used is that of R.D. Dawe - *Sophocles: Tragediæ; Tom. II* (Teubner, 1979).

ooo

### Introduction

For many people who have heard of or read the story of Oedipus, the central

theme is the incest of Oedipus with his mother - and then, the killing of his father. The same applies to many of those who read or watch a performance of one of the many modern translations.

In the majority of interpretations, explanations, and translations of and about *Oedipus Tyrannus* the incest and the patricide are viewed morally, and thus the tragedy becomes a sort of ancient 'morality tale', a view derived in part from the impression some translations give that Oedipus commits a 'sin' by sleeping with his mother and killing his father, and is punished because of it.

This sort of moral interpretation is, in my view, completely wrong. For the essence of this particular Greek tragedy lies in the realm of the gods, with the relationship between individuals, their communities, and the gods. The incest in particular is merely an interesting incident which occurs to a particular mortal and whose importance lies in the realm of prophecy - in what prophecy says about the will of the gods and the fate of mortals. Furthermore, this incest is not viewed with 'horror' by either Oedipus himself or by anyone else; it is never described as a 'monstrous deed' or anything of the kind. All Oedipus says about it is that he "should not" have slept with his mother; that is was disrespectful (qv. v.1184 and v.1441). Even when Oedipus is describing the first time he heard the prophecy that he would sleep with his mother and kill his father, the tone is quite restrained and definitely not moralistic: "Suffering and strangeness and misery were what his words foresaw: that I must copulate with my mother - and show, for mortals to behold, a family who would not endure..." (vv.790-3). He then goes on to say: "I fled... so that I would never have to face - because of that inauspicious prophecy - the disgrace of its fulfilment."

The tragedy lies in the fact that Oedipus was not initially disrespectful of the gods, for he tried to avoid killing his father, and sleeping with his mother; and when he learns that the oracle at Delphi has said that the plague which is killing the people of Thebes is the result of a defilement which has not been cleaned [the blood is still on a killer's hand] then he is ready to do all that the god says is necessary (vv.95ff.).

What actually occurs is that Oedipus oversteps the proper limits of behaviour - commits the mistake of hubris - in his quest to find the killer of Laius and discover his own identity. He begins to act like a 'tyrannus', with the term τύραννος describing an intemperate person who is so overcome by some passion or by a lust for power that they go far beyond the accepted and customary bounds of behaviour, thus exceeding the limits of or misusing whatever authority they have been entrusted with, thus becoming a 'tyrant' and behaving like a tyrant.

In the case of Oedipus, he first accuses the blind prophet Tiresias of conspiring against him. Then he accuses his brother-in-law Creon of wanting to overthrow

him. Later on, he is dismissive of the warnings of Jocasta and the Shepherd not to enquire further into his origins. He also boasts that he is a child of Fortuna. For Oedipus was certain of himself: he knew he had great skill [did he not solve the riddle of the Sphinx?]; he had great strength and courage [did he not by his own hands kill many men when he believed himself attacked (vv.801ff)]; he had power and wealth [was he not King of Thebes?].

But all these things, in relation to the power of the gods, mean nothing. As Creon says to him at the very end of the drama: "Do not desire to be master in all things, for you are without the strength which assisted you in your life." It is the gods who have taken away his strength, his skill and his power, and as the Chorus say in another Sophoclean tragedy: "Mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate." [Antigone, v.1338]. The tragedy of Oedipus ends with words which summarize all this: "Observe - here is Oedipus, he who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man: what clansman did not behold that fortune without envy? But what a tide of problems have come over him... Therefore, call no one lucky until, without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending."

Oedipus himself accepts that his troubles were the work of the gods: "It was Apollo - Apollo who brought such troubles to such a troubled ending." (vv.1329-1330). Oedipus goes on to say that his own blindness - which the blind prophet Tiresias had foreseen - was not the work of the gods, but his own handiwork.

The fundamental question which Sophocles poses in this tragedy is voiced by the Chorus when they reply (v.1347) to a request by Oedipus that he be exiled: "You are as helpless in that resolve as you were in your misfortune." What the tragedy is really explaining, is that however fortunate a person's fate may appear, it is not only appearance, but also depends on the will of the gods: it can be destroyed in a moment. Therefore, it is wise not to overstep the mark - it is wise not to be excessive; it is wise to observe the customs given by the gods and thus the gods themselves (qv. vv.863ff.). To do otherwise is insolence, disrespect (hubris) - and invites a retribution by the gods.

Sophocles says of hubris - "Insolence/hubris plants the tyrant - ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use..." (vv.872ff).

One further point about the *Oedipus Tyrannus* perhaps deserves noting. It is the mercy shown by the Shepherd when he is given the infant Oedipus by Laius and Jocasta to leave exposed on the mountain. They, because of a prophecy, have pierced the ankles of the infant Oedipus and fastened them together to make certain he dies. But the Shepherd is merciful and gives the

infant to another Shepherd. The consequences of this act of mercy are a sequence of misfortunes which Oedipus, Jocasta and the children of Oedipus suffer - and which, incidentally, Creon himself later suffers from (as evident in Sophocles' *Antigone*). Later, after his self-inflicted blinding, Oedipus curses the person who saved him: "May death come to whosoever while roaming those grasslands loosened those cruel fetters..... It was not a favourable deed. For had I died then, no grief such as this would have been caused to either me or my kin." (vv.1349f.).

Sophocles thus seems to be asking whether an act of mercy or compassion by a human being can lead to others suffering in the future, and if so, is such an act unwise because it is better to do what custom demands and/or what prophecy reveals may well be the will of the gods? Is such suffering necessary - as Aeschylus intimated - for us to learn? Can a prophecy be avoided; and if so, should it be, and how?

#### *A Note Regarding v.981-2*

This is one of the crucial lines in understanding how Sophocles - and the Greeks themselves - viewed what we call the 'incest' of Oedipus with his mother (importantly, the Greeks had no word for incest). On a first reading of the Greek text, it gives the impression that what is meant is: "many are the mortals who already - *in dreams also* - have lain with their mothers..." That is, while it is disrespectful and a disgrace, it is nothing to seriously concern oneself with.

Of course, this is far too 'amoral' for most translators and scholars to even consider, and so the line is taken as meaning: "many are the mortals who in dreams (and also in prophecies) have lain with their mothers..." This sense is rather strained, and not apparent on first reading the Greek.

However, if moral interpretations are not read into the *Oedipus Tyrannus* then what emerges, if for purpose of argument we accept the above interpretation, is that the incest may not be that important. Thus, what concerns Oedipus most is his killing of his father, for all he says about the incest is that he "should not" have slept with his mother and it is disrespectful (for example, qv. v.1184f and v.1441). What has brought about the plague which is devastating the clan of Thebes, is the killing of Laius, not the incest. Furthermore, the offender has not given tributes to the gods to clean his hands of the bloodstain (qv. v.1445 - which is often overlooked or misinterpreted). That is, the pollution caused by the killing has not been purified by offerings to the gods, and thus the offender has offended the gods because of the killing and not because of the incest.

On balance, therefore, and given - as mentioned above - that the incest is not viewed with 'horror' by either Oedipus himself or by anyone else in the drama, I have somewhat controversially interpreted the text as "For many are the mortals who have - *in dreams also* - lain with their mothers."

#### *A Note Regarding Daimons*

I have mostly transliterated - rather than attempted to interpret - the Greek term δαίμων. A 'daimon' is neither one of the major deities of ancient Greek culture nor what we would now call a 'supernatural being'. Rather, one of the functions of daimons - as given by the gods - is to guard or watch over individuals, and thus guide the destiny of the individual. They also give the individual their 'genius' (their natural abilities) and a daimon can be either positive or negative in the personal sense, that is, it can bring good or bad luck and thus good fortune or misfortune. A daimon, in effect, is thus seen as doing the work or the will of the gods.

Further, daimons also guard or watch over particular places, particularly those natural, sacred sites and places where the daimon thus becomes a 'nature spirit'. Daimons also guard and watch over families, dwellings, clans, towns and their citadels.

Thus daimons are not 'demons' and not necessarily malevolent, but rather a manifestation of how Nature and the Cosmos - of how the gods, θεοί - work, how they protect or oversee what is sacred or numinous, apportion out our lives, and gift us with good fortune or with misfortune.

DW Myatt  
1990  
(Revised 1994)

ooo

### Characters:

*Oedipus, King of Thebes*

*Jocasta, his Consort and wife*

*Creon, brother of Jocasta*

*Tiresias, the blind prophet*

*A Priest, of Zeus*



*First Messenger*

*Second Messenger*

*A Shepherd*

*Chorus, of Theban Elders*

Scene: Before the wealthy dwelling of Oedipus at Thebes

ooo

## **Oedipus Tyrannus**

OEDIPUS

My children - you most recently reared from ancient Cadmus -

Why do you hasten to these seats

Wreathed in suppliant branches?

Since the citadel is filled with incense,

Chants and lamentations

I did not deem it fitting, my children, to hear

The report of some messenger - so I come here myself:

I, Oedipus the renowned, who is respected by you all.

As you, Elder, are distinguished by nature,

You should speak for these others. Is your manner  
One of fear or affection? My will is to assist you  
For I would be indifferent to pain  
Were I not to have pity after such a supplication as this.

PRIEST

Oedipus, master of my land:  
You see how many sit here  
Before your altars - some not yet robust enough  
To fly far; some heavy as I, Priest of Zeus, with age;  
And these, chosen from our unmarried youth.  
Enwreathed like them, our people sit in the place of markets,  
20 By the twin shrines of Pallas  
And by the embers of the Ismenian oracle.

Our clan, as you yourself behold, already heaves  
Too much - its head bent  
To the depths bloodily heaving.  
Decay is in the unfruitful seeds in the soil,  
Decay is in our herds of cattle - our women  
Are barren or abort, and that god of fever  
Swoops down to strike our clan with an odious plague,  
Emptying the abode of Cadmus and giving dark Hades  
An abundance of wailing and lamentation.

Not as an equal of the gods do I,

And these children who sit by your altar, behold you -  
But as the prime man in our problems of life  
And in our dealings and agreements with daimons.  
You arrived at our town of Cadmus to disentangle us  
From the tax we paid to that harsh Songstress -  
And that with less than we knew because  
Without our experience. Rather - and it is the custom  
To say this - you had the support of a god  
And so made our lives to prosper.

40 Thus, Oedipus - you, the most noble of all -  
We all as suppliants beseech you  
To find us a defence, whether it be from a god's oracle  
Or whether it be learnt from some man.  
For those who are practical are, by events,  
Seen to give counsels which are the most effective.  
Most noble among mortals - restore our clan!  
But - be cautious. For now this land of yours  
Names you their protector for your swiftness before -  
Do not let it be recorded of your leadership  
That you raised us up again only to let us thereafter fall:  
So make us safe, and restore our clan.  
Favourable - then - the omens, and prosperity  
You brought us: be of the same kind, again!  
For, in commanding a land, as you are master of this,  
It is much better to be master of men than of an emptiness!

Of no value are a ship or a defensive tower  
If they are empty because no men dwell within them.

## OEDIPUS

You, my children, who lament - I know, for I am not without knowledge,  
Of the desire which brings you here. For well do I see  
60 All your sufferings - and though you suffer, it is I  
And not one of you that suffers the most.  
For your pain comes to each of you  
By itself, with nothing else, while my psyche  
Mourns for myself, for you and the clan.  
You have not awakened me from a resting sleep  
For indeed you should know of my many tears  
And the many paths of reflection I have wandered upon and tried.  
And, as I pondered, I found one cure  
Which I therefore took. The son of Menoeceus,  
Creon - he who is my kin by marriage - I have sent to that Pythian dwelling  
Of Phoebus to learn how I  
By word or deed can give deliverance to the clan.

But I have already measured the duration  
And am concerned: for where is he? He is longer than expected  
For his absence is, in duration, greater than is necessary.  
Yet when he does arrive, it would dishonourable  
For me not to act upon all that the gods makes clear.

PRIEST

It is fitting that you spoke thus - for observe that now  
We are signalled that Creon is approaching.

OEDIPUS

80 Lord Apollo! Let our fate be such  
That we are saved - and as bright as his face now is!

PRIEST

I conjecture it is pleasing since he arrives with his head crowned  
By laurel wreaths bearing many berries.

OEDIPUS

Soon we will know, for, in distance, he can hear us now.

*[Enter Creon]*

Lord - son of Menoeceus - my kin by marriage:  
Give to us the saying you received from the god!

CREON

It is propitious, for I call it fortunate when what is difficult to bear  
Is taken from us, enabling us thus to prosper again.

OEDIPUS

But what is it? I am not given more courage  
Nor more fear by your words.

CREON

Do you insist upon hearing it here,  
Within reach of these others - or shall we go within?

OEDIPUS

Speak it to all. For my concern for their suffering  
Is more than even that for my own psyche.

CREON

Then I shall speak to you what I heard from the god.  
The command of Lord Phoebus was clear -  
That defilement nourished by our soil  
Must be driven away, not given nourishment until it cannot be cured.

OEDIPUS

When came this misfortune? How to be cleansed?

CREON

100 Banishment of a man - or a killing in return for the killing  
To release us from the blood and thus this tempest upon our clan.

OEDIPUS

What man is thus fated to be so denounced?

CREON

My Lord, Laius was the Chief  
Of this land, before you guided us.

OEDIPUS

That I have heard and know well although I never saw him.

CREON

Because he was slaughtered it is clearly ordered that you  
Must punish the killing hands, whosoever they are.

OEDIPUS

But are they in this land? Can we still find  
The now faded marks of the ancient tracks of those so accused?

CREON

Still in our land, he said. What is sought  
Can be caught, but will escape if not attended to.

OEDIPUS

Was Laius in his dwelling, in his fields,

Or in another land when he met his death?

CREON

He said he was journeying to a shrine:

But, having gone, he did not return.

OEDIPUS

Was there no messenger, no other with him

Who saw anything and whom we could consult and thus learn from?

CREON

No - killed: all of them. Except one who fled in fear

And so saw nothing except the one thing he did speak of seeing.

OEDIPUS

120 What? One thing may help us learn many more

And such a small beginning may bring us hope.

CREON

He announced that robbers came upon them and, there being so many,

In their strength slew them with their many hands.

OEDIPUS

How could robbers do that? Unless - unless silver

Was paid to them, from here! Otherwise, they would not have the courage!



CREON

Such was the opinion. But with Laius killed  
No one arose to be his avenger since we had other troubles.

OEDIPUS

What troubles were before you that with your King fallen  
You were kept from looking?

CREON

The convoluted utterances of the Sphinx made us consider what was before us  
And leave unknown what was dark.

OEDIPUS

Then, as a start, I shall go back to make it visible.  
It is fitting for Phoebus, and fitting also for you  
For the sake of him dead, to return your concern there  
And fair that I am seen as an ally  
In avenging this land and the god.  
Yet not in the name of remote kin  
But for myself will I banish the abomination  
Since that person who killed may - and soon -  
140 And by his own hand, wish to avenge me.  
Thus in this way by so giving aid, I also benefit myself.

Now and swiftly, my children, stand up from these steps -  
Raising your suppliant branches -  
And go to summon here the people of Cadmus  
For I shall do all that is required. Either good fortune -  
If the gods wills - will be shown to be ours, or we shall perish.

*[Exit Oedipus]*

PRIEST

Stand, children, for that favour  
For which we came he has announced he will do.  
May Phoebus -who delivered this oracle -  
Be our Saviour and cause our suffering to cease.

*[Exit Priest. Enter Chorus]*

CHORUS

Zeus - your pleasing voice has spoken  
But in what manner from gold-rich Pytho do you come  
To the splendour that is Thebes?

My reason is stretched by dread as fear shakes me -  
O Delian Paeon I invoke you! -  
And I am in awe. For is this new  
Or the continuation of that obligation  
Which each season brings again?

Speak to me with your divine voice,  
You born from she whom we treasure - our Hope!

You I shall name first - you the daughter of Zeus, the divine Athene!  
160 And then you, her sister, who defends our lands - Artemis! -  
Whose illustrious throne is the circle of our market.  
And you, Phoebus with your far-reaching arrows!  
You - the triad who guard us from death! Appear to me!  
When misfortune moved over our clan before  
You came to completely drive away that injuring fire -  
So now come to us, again!

Beyond count are the injuries I bear  
And all my comrades are sick;  
There is no spear of thought to defend us -  
The offspring of our fertile soil do not grow  
While at the birth there are no cries of joy  
For the women stretched by their labour:  
I behold one after another rushing forth - swifter than feathered birds,  
Swifter than invincible fire -  
Toward the land of the twilight god!

They are beyond count and make the clan to die:  
180 For her descendants lie unpitied, unmourned on the ground  
Condemning others to death

As both the child-less and the mothers gather  
Around the base of the altars  
To labour as suppliants with their injurious laments  
Although clear are the hymns to the Healer  
Above those accompanying wailing voices!  
In answer, you whom we hold precious - daughter of Zeus -  
Send us She of strength with the beautiful eyes!

Grant that fiery Ares - he who fights not with shield of bronze  
But who burns as he encircles with his battle-cry -  
Turns around to swiftly run back, away from our fatherland  
With a fair wind following, to that great Chamber of Amphitrite  
Or to that Thracian harbour where strangers are dashed,  
Since what he neglects at night  
He achieves when day arrives.  
Thus - you who carry fire,  
Who bestows the power of lighting -  
All-father Zeus: waste him beneath your thunder!

Lord Lyceus! From your gold-bound bowstring  
I wish you to deal out the hardest of your arrows  
So they rise before us as a defence!  
And you - Artemis - who by your gleaming light  
Rushes through the mountains of Lycia.

And you of the golden mitre whose name  
Is that of our land - I invoke you  
Ruddied Bacchus with E-U-O-I! -  
With your roaming Maenads  
Come near to us with your blazing pine-torch  
And gleaming eyes, to be our ally  
Against that god given no honour by gods!

*[Enter Oedipus]*

OEDIPUS

You ask and what you ask will come -  
For if you in your sickness listen and accept and assist me  
You shall receive the strength to lift you out of this trouble.  
I here make the declaration even though I am a stranger to that report  
220 And a stranger to that deed. I, myself, would not have delayed  
Tracking this, even had there been no signs.  
But since it was after these things I became a tax-paying citizen among you  
citizens,  
I proclaim this now to all who are of Cadmus:  
Whosoever, concerning Laius son of Labdacus,  
Knows the man who killed him  
I command him to declare everything to me.  
  
But if he is afraid, he can himself remove the accusation  
Against him since what awaits him

Shall not be hostile since he shall pass uninjured to another land.

But if you know of another from another region

Whose hand did it, do not be silent

For I shall reward and confer favours upon you.

But if you keep silent because he is your own kin

Or because you yourself are afraid and so reject this -

Then hear what I of necessity must do.

I forbid that man, whoever he is, to be in this land -

This land where I have power and authority:

No one is to receive him nor speak to him;

Neither is he to share in your offering thanks to the gods,

Nor in the sacrifices or in the libations before them.

Instead, everyone shall push him away - for our defilement

Is, in truth, him: as the Pythian god

By his oracle just now announced to me.

Thus in such a way do I and this god

And the man who was killed become allies -

And so this pact I make concerning he who did that deed

Whether alone or together with others in secret:

Being ignoble, may his miserable life ignobly waste away.

And I also make this pact - that should he arrive at my dwelling

And with my consent stay by my hearth, then may that disease

I desired for those ones come to me!

So I command you to accomplish this

On behalf of me, the god and this land  
Now barren, lain waste and without gods.  
For even had no god sent you to deal with this matter  
It would not have been fitting to leave it uncleaned  
For the man killed was both brave and your own lord:  
You should have enquired. However, I now have the authority  
And hold the command that was his,  
260 And now possess his chambers and his woman - seeded by us both -  
And by whom we might have children shared in common had that family  
Not had its misfortune and thus there had been a birth:  
But it was not to be, for fate bore down upon him.  
Thus, I - as if he were my own father -  
Will fight for him and will go to any place  
To search for and to seize the one whose hand killed  
That son of Labdacus - he of Polydorus,  
Of Cadmus before that and before then of ancient Agenor.

As to those who do not do this for me, I ask the god  
That the seeds they sow in the earth shall not bring forth shoots  
Nor their women children, and also that it be their destiny  
To be destroyed by this thing - or one that is much worse.  
But as for you others, of Cadmus, to whom this is pleasing -  
May the goddess, Judgement, who is on our side,  
And all of the gods, be with us forever.

CHORUS

Bound by your oath, my Lord, I speak:

I am not the killer - nor can I point out he who did the killing.

It is he who sent us on this search -

Phoebus - who should say who did that work.

OEDIPUS

280 That would be fair. But to compel the gods

Against their will is not within the power of any man.

CHORUS

Shall I speak of what I consider is the second best thing to do?

OEDIPUS

Do not neglect to explain to me even what is third!

CHORUS

He who sees the most of what Lord Phoebus knows

Is Lord Tiresias - and it is from his watching, and clearness,

My Lord, that we might learn the most.

OEDIPUS

I have not been inactive in attending to that:

Since Creon spoke of it, I have sent two escorts -



And it is a wonder after this long why he is not here.

CHORUS

What can still be told of those things is blunt from age.

OEDIPUS

What is there? For I am watching for any report.

CHORUS

It was said that he was killed by travellers.

OEDIPUS

That I have heard - but no one sees here he who observed that.

CHORUS

But he will have had his share of fear

Having heard your pact - and will not have stayed here.

OEDIPUS

And he who had no fear of the deed? Would such a one fear such words?

CHORUS

But here is he who can identify him. For observe,

It is the prophet of the god who is led here:

He who of all mortals has the most ability to reveal things.

*[Enter Tiresias, guided by a boy]*

OEDIPUS

300 Tiresias - you who are learned in all things: what can be taught; what is never spoken of;

What is in the heavens and what treads on the earth -

Although you have no sight, can you see how our clan

Has given hospitality to sickness? You are our shield,

Our protector - for you, Lord, are the only remedy we have.

Phoebus - if you have not heard it from the messengers -

Sent us as answer to our sending: release from the sickness

Will come only if we are skilled enough to discover who killed Laius

And kill them or drive them away from this land as fugitives.

Therefore, do not deny to us from envy the speech of birds

Or any other way of divination which you have,

But pull yourself and this clan - and me -

Pull us away from all that is defiled by those who lie slain.

Our being depends on you. For if a man assists someone

When he has the strength to do so, then it is a noble labour.

TIRESIAS

Ah! There is harm in judging when there is no advantage

In such a judgement. This I usefully understood  
But then totally lost. I should not have come here.

OEDIPUS

What is this? Are you heartless, entering here so?

TIRESIAS

Permit me to return to my dwelling. Easier then will it be  
For you to carry what is yours, and I what is mine, if you are persuaded in this.

OEDIPUS

Such talk is unusual because unfriendly toward this clan  
Which nourishes you: will you deprive us of oracles?

TIRESIAS

Yes - for I know that the words you say  
Are not suitable. And I will not suffer because of mine.

OEDIPUS

Before the gods! Turn aside that judgement! Here, before you,  
All of us are as humble suppliants!

TIRESIAS

Since all of you lack judgement, I will not speak either about myself  
Or you and so tell about defects.

OEDIPUS

What? If you are aware of it but will not speak,  
Do you intend to betray and so totally destroy your clan?

TIRESIAS

I will not cause pain to either you or myself. Therefore,  
Why these aimless rebukes since I will not answer.

OEDIPUS

Not...? Why, you ignoble, worthless...! A rock,  
By its nature, can cause anger. Speak it! -  
Or will you show there is no end to your hardness?

TIRESIAS

You rebuke me for anger - but it is with you  
That she dwells, although you do not see this and blame me instead.

OEDIPUS

And whose being would not have anger  
340 Hearing how you dishonour our clan!

TIRESIAS

By themselves, these things will arrive - even though my silence covers them.

OEDIPUS

Then since they shall arrive, you must speak to me about them!

TIRESIAS

Beyond this, I explain nothing. But if it is your will,  
Become savage with wroth in anger.

OEDIPUS

Yes indeed I will yield to the anger possessing me  
Since I do understand! For I know you appear to me  
To have worked together with others to produce that deed,  
Although it was not your hand that did the killing. But - had you sight -  
I would say that the blow was yours and yours alone!

TIRESIAS

Is that so! I declare it is to the proclamation  
You announced that you must adhere to, so that from this day  
You should not speak to me or these others  
Since you are the unhealthy pollution in our soil!

OEDIPUS

It is disrespectful to bound forth  
With such speech! Do you believe you will escape?

TIRESIAS

I have escaped. For, by my revelations, I am nourished and made strong.

OEDIPUS

Where was your instruction from? Certainly not from your craft!

TIRESIAS

From you - for against my desire I cast out those words.

OEDIPUS

What words? Say them again so I can fully understand.

TIRESIAS

Did you not hear them before? Or are your words a test?

OEDIPUS

They expressed no meaning to me. Say them again.

TIRESIAS

I said you are the killer and thus the man you seek.

OEDIPUS

You shall not escape if you injure me so again!

TIRESIAS

Shall I then say more to make your anger greater?

OEDIPUS

As much as you desire for you are mistaken in what you say.

TIRESIAS

I say that with those nearest to you are you concealed  
In disrespectful intimacy, not seeing the trouble you are in.

OEDIPUS

Do you believe you can continue to speak so and remain healthy?

TIRESIAS

Yes, if revelations have power.

OEDIPUS

They do for others, but not for you! They have none for you  
Because you are blind in your ears, in your purpose as well as in your eyes!

TIRESIAS

In faulting me for that you are unfortunate  
Because soon there will be no one who does not find fault with you.

OEDIPUS

You are nourished by night alone! It is not for me,  
Or anyone here who sees by the light, to injure you.

TIRESIAS

It is not my destiny to be defeated by you -  
Apollo is sufficient for that, since it is his duty to obtain vengeance.

OEDIPUS

Were those things Creon's inventions - or yours?

TIRESIAS

It is not Creon who harms you - it is yourself.

OEDIPUS

380 Ah! Wealth, Kingship and that art of arts  
Which surpasses others - these, in life, are envied:  
And great is the jealousy cherished because of you.  
It is because of this authority of mine - which this clan  
Gave into my hands, unasked -  
That the faithful Creon, a comrade from the beginning,  
Desires to furtively creep about to overthrow me  
And hires this performing wizard,  
This cunning mendicant priest who sees only  
For gain but who is blind in his art!



So now tell me: where and when have you given clear divinations?  
For you did not - when that bitch was here chanting her verses -  
Speak out and so give deliverance to your clansfolk.  
Yet her enigma was not really for some passing man  
To disclose since it required a prophet's art:  
But your augury foretold nothing and neither did you learn anything  
From any god! It was I who came along -  
I, Oedipus, who sees nothing! - I who put an end to her  
By happening to use reason rather than a knowledge of augury.  
Now it is me you are trying to exile since your purpose  
Is to stand beside the throne among Creon's supporters.  
But I intend to make you sorry! Both of you - who worked together  
To drive me out. And if I did not respect you as an Elder,  
Pain would teach you a kind of judgement!

#### CHORUS

Yet I suspect that he has spoken  
In anger, as I believe you did, Oedipus.  
But this is not what is needed. Instead, it is the god's oracle  
That will, if examined, give us the best remedy.

#### TIRESIAS

Though you are the King, I have at least an equality of words  
In return, for I also have authority.

I do not live as your servant - but for Loxias -

Just as I am not inscribed on the roll as being under Creon's patronage.

Thus, I speak for myself - since you have found fault with me because I am blind.

When you look, you do not see the trouble you are in,

Nor where you dwell, nor who you are intimate with.

Do you know from whom your being arose? Though concealed, you are the enemy

Of your own, below and upon this land:

On both sides beaten by your mother and your father

To be driven out from this land by a swift and angry Fury -

And you who now see straight will then be in darkness.

420 What place will not be a haven for your cries?

What Cithaeron will not, and soon, resound with them

When you understand your wedding-night in that abode

Into where you fatefully and easily sailed but which is no haven from your voyage?

Nor do you understand the multitude of troubles

Which will make you equal with yourself and your children.

Thus it is, so therefore at my mouth and at Creon's

Throw your dirt! For there is no other mortal whose being

Will be so completely overwhelmed by troubles as yours.

OEDIPUS

Am I to endure hearing such things from him?

May misfortune come to you! Go from here - without delay!

Away from my dwelling! Turn and go!

TIRESIAS

I would not have come here, had you not invited me.

OEDIPUS

I did not know you would speak nonsense

Or I would have been unwilling to ask you here to my dwelling.

TIRESIAS

So you believe I was born lacking sense?

Yet I made sense to those who gave you birth.

OEDIPUS

What? Wait! Which mortals gave me birth?

TIRESIAS

It is on this day that you are born and also destroyed.

OEDIPUS

All that you have said is enigmatic or lacking in reason.

TIRESIAS

440 But are you not the best among us in working things out?

OEDIPUS

Do you find fault with what I have discovered is my strength?

TIRESIAS

It is that very fortune which has totally ruined you.

OEDIPUS

I am not concerned - if I have preserved this clan.

TIRESIAS

Then I shall depart. You - boy! Lead me away.

OEDIPUS

Let him lead you away. While here, you are under my feet  
And annoy me. When gone - you will give me no more pain.

TIRESIAS

I shall go but speak that for which I was fetched, with no dread  
Because of your countenance. For you cannot harm me.  
I say that the man you have long searched for  
And threatened and made proclamation about for the killing  
Of Laius - he is present, here.  
Although called a foreigner among us, he will be exposed as a native

Of Thebes but have no delight in that event.

Blind, though recently able to see -

And a beggar, who before was rich - he shall go to foreign lands

With a stick to guide him along the ground on his journey.

And he shall be exposed to his children as both their father

And their brother; to the woman who gave him birth

As both her son and husband; and to his father

460 As his killer who seeded her after him. So go

Within to reason this out and if you catch me deceiving you,

Then say that in my prophecies there is nothing for me to be proud of.

*[Exit Tiresias and Oedipus]*

CHORUS

Who is the one that the god-inspired oracle-stone at Delphi saw

With bloody hands doing that which it is forbidden to speak of?

For now is the day for him to move his feet swifter

Than storm's horses as he flees

Since the son of Zeus - armed with fire and lightning -

Is leaping toward him

Accompanied by those angry

And infallible Furies!

It was not that long ago that the omen shone forth

From the snows of Parnassus:

Search everywhere for that man who is concealed;

He who wanders up to the wild-woods,  
Through caves and among the rocks like some bull -  
He unlucky in his desolation who by his unlucky feet  
Seeks to elude that prophecy from the Temple at the centre of the world -  
That living doom which circles around him.

There is a strange wonder - wrought by he who is skilled in augury;  
I cannot believe, yet cannot disbelieve, nor explain my confusion  
For fear hovers over me. I cannot see what is here, or what is behind!  
Yet - if there was between the family of Labdacus,  
And that son of Polybus, any strife existing  
Either now or before, I have not learned of it  
To thus use it as proof to examine by trial and thus attack  
The public reputation of Oedipus, becoming thus for the family of Labdacus  
Their ally in respect of that killing which has been concealed.

Rather - this is for Zeus and Apollo, who have the skill  
500 To understand, although that other man has won more  
For his discoveries than I.  
Even so, on some things nothing decisive is discovered:  
As in learning, where by learning  
One man may overtake another.  
Thus not before I see that they who accuse him are speaking straight  
Will I declare myself for them  
For she was visible - that winged girl who came down against him -  
And we then saw proof of his knowledge, which was beneficial to our clan.

So therefore my decision is not to condemn him as ignoble.

*[Enter Creon]*

CREON

Clansmen! Having learnt of a horrible accusation  
Made against me by Oedipus the King  
I hastened here! If, in these our troubles,  
He deems that he has suffered because of me -  
Been injured by some word or some deed -  
Then I would have no desire to live as long as I might  
Having to bear such talk! For it is not simple -  
The damage that would be done to me by such words:  
Rather, it would be great, for I would be dishonoured before my clan -  
With you and my kinsfolk hearing my name dishonoured.

CHORUS

That insult perhaps came forth because of anger -  
Rather than being a conclusion from reason.

CREON

And it was declared that it was my reasoning  
Which persuaded the prophet to utter false words?

CHORUS

It was voiced - but I do not know for what reason.

CREON

Were his eyes straight, was he thinking straight  
When he made that allegation against me?

CHORUS

I do not know. For I do not observe what my superiors do.  
But here, from out of his dwelling, comes the Chief himself.

*[Enter Oedipus]*

OEDIPUS

You there! Why are you here? Have you so much face  
That you dare to come to my home?  
You - the one exposed as the killer of its man  
And, vividly, as a robber seeking my Kingship!  
In the name of the gods, tell me if it was cowardice or stupidity  
That you saw in me when you resolved to undertake this!  
Did you reason that I would not observe your cunning treachery -  
Or, if I did learn of it, I would not defend myself?  
540 Instead, it was senseless of you to set your hand to this -  
With no crowd or comrades - and go in pursuit of authority:  
That which is captured by using wealth and the crowd!



CREON

You know what you must do - in answer to your words

Be as long in hearing my reply so that you can, with knowledge, judge for yourself.

OEDIPUS

Your words are clever - but I would be mistaken to learn from you,

Since I have found how dangerous and hostile you are to me.

CREON

That is the first thing you should hear me speak about.

OEDIPUS

Do not tell me: it is that you are *not* a traitor!

CREON

If you believe that what is valuable is pride, by itself,

Without a purpose, then your judgement is not right.

OEDIPUS

And if you believe you can betray a kinsman

And escape without punishment, then your judgement is no good.

CREON

I agree that such a thing is correct -

So inform me what injury you say I have inflicted.

OEDIPUS

Did you convince me or did you not convince me that I should  
Send a man to bring here that respected prophet?

CREON

I am the same person now as the one who gave that advice.

OEDIPUS

How long is the duration since Laius -

CREON

Since he did what? I do not understand.

OEDIPUS

560 Since he disappeared: removed by deadly force?

CREON

The measurement of that duration is great - far into the past.

OEDIPUS

So - was that prophet then at his art?

CREON

Yes: of equal skill and having the same respect as now.

OEDIPUS

At that period did he make mention of me?

CREON

Certainly not to me nor when I was standing nearby.

OEDIPUS

Was there no inquiry held about the killing?

CREON

It was indeed undertaken, although nothing was learned.

OEDIPUS

So why did that clever person not speak, then?

CREON

I do not know. And about things I cannot judge for myself, I prefer to be silent.

OEDIPUS

570 But you do know why and would say it if you had good judgement!

CREON

What? If I did know, then I would not deny it.

OEDIPUS

It is that if he had not met with you,  
He would not have spoken about "my" killing of Laius.

CREON

You should know if he indeed said that.  
Now, however, it is fair that I question you just as you have me.

OEDIPUS

Question me well - for you will never convict me as the killer!

CREON

Nevertheless. You had my sister - took her as wife?

OEDIPUS

That is an assertion that cannot be denied.

CREON

Does she, in this land, possess an authority the equal of yours?

OEDIPUS

Whatsoever is her wish, she obtains from me.

CREON

And am I - who completes the triad - not the equal of you both?

OEDIPUS

And it because of that, that you are exposed as a traitor to your kin!

CREON

No! For consider these reasons for yourself, as I have,

Examining this first: do you believe anyone

Would prefer authority with all its problems

To untroubled calm if they retained the same superiority?

I myself do not nurture such a desire

To be King rather than do the deeds of a King:

No one commanding good judgement would, whoever they were.

Now, and from you, I receive everything with no problems

But if the authority was mine, I would have to do many things against my nature.

How then could being a King bring me more pleasure

Than the trouble-free authority and power I have?

I am not yet so much deceived

As to want honours other than those which profit me.

Now, I greet everyone, and now, everyone bids me well

Just as, now, those who want something from you call upon me  
Since only in that way can they possibly have success.  
Why, then, would I let go of these to accept that?

600 A traitor cannot, because of his way of thinking, have good judgement.  
I am not a lover of those whose nature is to reason so  
And would not endure them if they did act.  
As proof of this, first go yourself to Pytho  
To inquire whether the message I brought from the oracle there was true  
And if you detect that I and that interpreter of signs  
Plotted together, then kill me - not because of a single vote,  
But because of two, for you will receive mine as well as yours.  
I should not be accused because of unclear reasoning and that alone.

It is not fair when the ignoble, rashly,  
Are esteemed as worthy or the worthy as ignoble.  
I say that to cast away an honourable friend is to do the same  
To that which is with life and which you cherish the most.  
It takes a while for an intuition to be made steady  
For it is only after a while that a man shows if he is fair  
Although an ignoble one is known as such in a day.

#### CHORUS

Honourable words from someone cautious of falling,  
My Lord. Those swift in their judgement are unsteady.

OEDIPUS

But when there is a plot against me which is swiftly and furtively  
Moving forward, then I must be swift in opposing that plot  
Since if I remain at rest, then indeed  
What is about to be done, will be - because of my mistake.

CREON

Then you still desire to cast me from this land?

OEDIPUS

Not so! It is your death, not your exile, that I want!

CREON

When you explain to me what is the nature of this thing "envy" -

OEDIPUS

You speak without yielding and not in good faith!

CREON

Is it not your 'good judgement' that is keenly being observed?

OEDIPUS

But at least it is mine!

CREON

And for that very reason it is but the equal of mine.

OEDIPUS

But you have a treacherous nature!

CREON

But if nothing has been proved -

OEDIPUS

Even so, there must be authority.

CREON

Not when that authority is defective.

OEDIPUS

My clan! My clan!

CREON

A portion of the clan is for me - not wholly for you!

CHORUS

My Lords, stop this! It is fortunate perhaps that I observe  
Jocasta approaching from her dwelling, since it is fitting for her



To make right the quarrel which now excites you.

*[Enter Jocasta]*

JOCASTA

You wretches! Why this ill-advised strife  
Produced by your tongues? Are you not dishonoured - when this land  
Is suffering - by becoming moved by personal troubles?  
You should go within; while you, Creon, should go to your dwelling  
So as not to let what is only nothing become a great sorrow.

CREON

My kin by blood! It is horrible what your husband Oedipus,  
640 From two unfair things, has decided it is right to do!  
To push me from this land of my ancestors - or to seize and kill me!

OEDIPUS

Yes! For he was, my lady, caught trying to injure  
My person by a cowardly art.

CREON *[looking upward]*

Deny me, this day, your assistance - curse and destroy me

If I committed that which I am accused of doing!

JOCASTA

Before the god, trust him, Oedipus!

Chiefly because of this oath to the god

And then because of me and these others here beside you.

CHORUS

My Lord - be persuaded, having agreed to reflect on this.

OEDIPUS

To what do you wish me to yield?

CHORUS

Respect he who before has never been weak - he now strengthened by that oath.

OEDIPUS

Do you know what it is that you so desire?

CHORUS

I do know.

OEDIPUS

Then explain what you believe it to be.

CHORUS

When a comrade is under oath, you should never accuse him  
Because of unproved rumours and brand him as being without honour.

OEDIPUS

Then attend to this well. When you seek this, it is my  
Destruction that is sought - or exile from this land.

CHORUS

660 No! By the god who is Chief of all the gods -  
Helios! Bereft of gods, bereft of kin - may the extremist death  
Of all be mine if such a judgement was ever mine!  
But ill-fated would be my breath of life - which the decay in this soil  
Already wears down - if to those troubles of old  
There was joined this trouble between you and him.

OEDIPUS

Then allow him to go - although it requires my certain death  
Or that I, without honour and by force, am thrown out from this land.  
And it is because of you, not because of him - the mercy coming from your  
mouth -  
That I do this. As for him - wherever he goes - I will detest him!

CREON

It is clear that you are hostile as you yield - and so dangerous, even though

Your anger has gone. For natures such as yours  
Are deservedly painful to those who endure them.

OEDIPUS

Then go away and leave me.

CREON

I shall depart. To you, I remain unknown - but to these, here, I am the same.

*[Exit Creon]*

CHORUS

My Lady - why do you delay in returning with him into your dwelling?

JOCASTA

680 Because I wish to learn what has happened.

CHORUS

Suspicion arising from unreasonable talk - and a wounding that was unfair.

JOCASTA

From both of them?

CHORUS

Indeed.

JOCASTA

What was the talk?

CHORUS

Too much for me, too much for this land, wearied before this.

Since it appears to have ceased, here - let it remain so.

OEDIPUS

Observe where you have come to with your prowess in reason

By me giving way and blunting my passion!

CHORUS

My Lord, I will not say this only this once:

My judgement would be defective - and by my purposeless judgements

Would be shown to be so - if I deserted you,

You who when this land I love was afflicted

And despairing, set her straight.

Now be for us our lucky escort, again!

JOCASTA

My Lord - before the god explain to me

What act roused such wrath and made you hold onto it.

OEDIPUS

700 It will be told. For I respect you, my lady, more than them.

It was Creon - the plot he had against me.

JOCASTA

Then speak about it - if you can clearly affix blame for the quarrel.

OEDIPUS

He declared that it was me who had killed Laius.

JOCASTA

Did he see it, for himself - or learn of it from someone?

OEDIPUS

It was rather that he let that treacherous prophet bring it -

So as to make his own mouth entirely exempt.

JOCASTA

Therefore, and this day, acquit yourself of what was spoken about

And listen to me, for you will learn for yourself

That no mortal is given the skill to make prophecies.

I bring to light evidence for this:

An oracle came to Laius once - not I say  
From Phoebus himself but from a servant -  
That his own death was destined to come from a child  
Which he and I would produce.  
But - as it was reported - one day foreign robbers  
Slew him where three cart-tracks meet.  
As to the child - his growth had not extended to the third day  
When we yoked the joints of its feet  
And threw it - by another's hand - upon a desolate mountain.

So, in those days, Apollo did not bring about, for him,  
That he slay the father who begot him - nor, for Laius,  
That horror which he feared - being killed by his son.  
Such were the limits set by those words of revelation!  
Therefore, do not concern yourself with them: for what a god  
Wants others to find out, he will by himself unmistakably reveal.

OEDIPUS

As I heard you just now my lady,  
My judgement became muddled as the breath of life left me.

JOCASTA

What has so divided you that you turn away to speak?

OEDIPUS

I believed I heard this from you - that Laius

730 Was killed near where three cart-tracks meet.

JOCASTA

It was, indeed, voiced - and is so, still.

OEDIPUS

Where is the place where came his misfortune?

JOCASTA

The nearby land of Phocis - where the track splits  
To come from Delphi and from Daulia.

OEDIPUS

How many seasons have passed since that thing was done?

JOCASTA

It was just before you held this land's authority  
That it was revealed by a herald to the clan.

OEDIPUS

O Zeus! What was your purpose in doing this to me?

JOCASTA

What is it that burdens your heart, Oedipus?



OEDIPUS

740 Do not enquire yet; rather, explain to me the appearance Laius had:  
Was he at the height of his vigour?

JOCASTA

He was big - his head covered in hair but having a recent whiteness.  
His build was not far removed from your own.

OEDIPUS

Wretch that I am! For it seems that over myself  
I, without looking, threw that terrible curse!

JOCASTA

What are you saying? My Lord - I tremble as I look at you.

OEDIPUS

My courage is replaced by fear - that the prophet possesses sight!  
More can be explained - if you make known one more thing.

JOCASTA

Though I still tremble, if I have knowledge of what you ask, I shall speak it.

OEDIPUS

750 Did he have a slender one - or did he have many men

As escort as befits a warrior chieftain?

JOCASTA

Altogether there were five, one of those being an official -  
And one carriage, which conveyed Laius.

OEDIPUS

Now it becomes visible. But who was he,  
My lady, who gave you that report?

JOCASTA

A servant - the very person who alone returned, having escaped harm.

OEDIPUS

Then perhaps he is to be found, at this moment, within our dwelling?

JOCASTA

Definitely not. For as soon as he returned here again and saw you  
Were the master of what the dead Laius had held,

760 He beseeched me - his hand touching mine -  
To send him away to the wilds as a shepherd to a herd,  
Far away where he could not see the town.  
And so I sent him. For I deemed him worthy,  
As a slave, to have a greater reward than that favour.

OEDIPUS

Then swiftly - and with no delay - can he be returned here?

JOCASTA

He is around. But why do you desire it?

OEDIPUS

I fear, my lady, that far too much has already  
Been said by me. Yet it is my wish to see him.

JOCASTA

Then he shall be here. But it merits me to learn,  
My Lord, what burden within you is so difficult to bear.

OEDIPUS

I shall not deprive you of that - for what I fear  
Comes closer. Who is more important to me than you  
To whom I would speak when going through such an event as this?

Polybus the Corinthian was my father -  
And the Dorian, Meropè, my mother. I was, in merit,  
Greater than the clansfolk there - until I was, by chance,  
Attacked. This, for me, was worthy of my wonder  
Although unworthy of my zeal:  
At a feast a man overfull with wine

780 Mumbled into his chalice what I was falsely said to be my father's.

I was annoyed by this during that day - scarcely able

To hold myself back. On the one following that, I sought to question

My mother and father, and they were indignant

At he who had let loose those words at me.

Because of this, I was glad, although I came to itch from them

For much did they slither about.

So, unobserved by my mother and father, I travelled

To Pytho. But for that which I had come, Phoebus there

Did not honour me; instead - suffering and strangeness

And misery were what his words foresaw:

That I must copulate with my mother - and show,

For mortals to behold, a family who would not endure -

And also be the killer of the father who planted me.

I, after hearing this - and regarding Corinth -

Thereafter by the stars measured the ground

I fled upon so that I would never have to face -

Because of that inauspicious prophecy - the disgrace of its fulfilment.

And while so travelling I arrived in those regions

Where you spoke of the King himself being killed.

800 For you, my lady, I shall declare what has not been spoken of before.

While journeying, I came near to that three-fold track,

And at that place an official and a carriage

With young horse with a man mounted in it - such as you spoke of -

Came toward me. And he who was in front as well as the Elder himself  
Were for driving me vigorously from the path.  
But the one who had pushed me aside - the carriage driver -  
I hit in anger: and the Elder, observing this  
From his chariot, watched for me to go past and then on the middle  
Of my head struck me with his forked goad.  
He was certainly repaid with more! By a quick blow  
From the staff in this, my hand, he fell back  
From the middle of the carriage and rolled straight out!  
And then I destroyed all the others. Yet if to that stranger  
And Laius there belongs a common relation  
Then who exists who is now as unfortunate as this man, here?  
Who of our race of mortals would have a daimon more hostile -  
He to whom it is not permitted for a stranger nor a clansman  
To receive into their homes, nor even speak to -  
But who, instead, must be pushed aside? And it is such things as these -  
These curses! - that I have brought upon myself.

The wife of he who is dead has been stained by these hands  
Which killed him. Was I born ignoble?  
Am I not wholly unclean? For I must be exiled  
And in my exile never see my family  
Nor step into my own fatherland - or by marriage  
I will be yoked to my mother and slay my father  
Polybus, he who produced and nourished me.  
And would not someone who decided a savage daimon

Did these things to me be speaking correctly?

You awesome, powerful, gods -

May I never see that day! May I go away

From mortals, unobserved, before I see

The stain of that misfortune come to me.

CHORUS

I also, my Lord, would wish to draw away from such things.

But surely until you learn from he who was there, you can have expectations?

OEDIPUS

Indeed. There is for me just such an expectation,

And one alone - to wait for that herdsman.

JOCASTA

And when he does appear, what is your intent?

OEDIPUS

I will explain it to you. If his report is found to be

840 The same as yours, then I shall escape that suffering.

JOCASTA

Did you then hear something odd in my report?

OEDIPUS

You said he spoke of men - of robbers - being the ones  
Who did the killing. If, therefore, he still  
Speaks of there being many of them, then I am not the killer  
For one cannot be the same as the many of that kind.  
But if he says a solitary armed traveller, then it is clear,  
And points to me as the person who did that work.

JOCASTA

You should know that it was announced in that way.  
He cannot go back and cast them away  
For they were heard, here, by the clan - not just by me.  
Yet even if he turns away from his former report,  
Never, my Lord, can the death of Laius  
Be revealed as a straight fit - for it was Loxias  
Who disclosed he would be killed by the hand of my child.  
But he - the unlucky one - could not have slain him  
For he was himself destroyed before that.  
Since then I have not by divination looked into  
What is on either side of what is next.

OEDIPUS

I find that pleasing. However, that hired hand  
Should be summoned here by sending someone - it should not be neglected.

JOCASTA

I will send someone, and swiftly. But let us go into our dwelling.

I would not do anything that would be disagreeable to you.

*[Exit Oedipus and Jocasta]*

CHORUS

May the goddess of destiny be with me

So that I bear an entirely honourable attitude

In what I say and in what I do -

As set forth above us in those customs born and

Given their being in the brightness of the heavens

And fathered only by Olympus.

For they were not brought forth by mortals,

Whose nature is to die. Not for them the lethargy

Of laying down to sleep

Since the god within them is strong, and never grows old.

Insolence plants the tyrant:

There is insolence if by a great foolishness

There is a useless over-filling which goes beyond

The proper limits -

It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights

And then that hurtling toward that Destiny

Where the useful foot has no use.

880 Yet since it is good for a clan to have combat,



I ask the god never to deliver us from it:  
As may I never cease from having the god for my champion.

If someone goes forth and by his speaking  
Or the deeds of his hands looks down upon others  
With no fear of the goddess Judgement and not in awe  
Of daimons appearing,  
Then may he be seized by a destructive Fate  
Because of his unlucky weakness.  
If he does not gain what he gains fairly,  
Does not keep himself from being disrespectful,  
And in his foolishness holds onto what should not be touched,  
Then how will such a man thereafter keep away those arrows of anger  
Which will take revenge on his breath of life?  
For if such actions are those are esteemed,  
Is this my respectful choral-dance required?

No more would I go in awe to that never to be touched sacred-stone,  
Nor to that Temple at Abae,  
Nor Olympia - if those prophecies do not fit  
In such a way that all mortals can point it out.  
But you whom it is right to call my master -  
Zeus! - you who rule over everyone: do not forget this,  
You whose authority is, forever, immortal.  
For they begin to decay - those prophecies of Laius  
Given long ago, and are even now set aside

And nowhere does Apollo become manifest because esteemed:  
For the rituals of the gods are being lost.

*[Enter Jocasta]*

JOCASTA

Lords of this land - the belief has been given to me  
That I should go to the Temples of our guardian gods, my hands  
Holding a garland and an offering of incense.  
For Oedipus lets his breath of life be too much possessed by his heart  
Because of all his afflictions - since, unlike a man who reasons  
And determines the limits of what is strange by the past,  
He is fearful when someone, in speaking, speaks of such things.

Therefore, since none of my counsels have achieved anything,  
I come here - to you, Lycean Apollo, since you are close to us -  
920 To petition you by asking you with these my gifts  
That we are cleansed of defilement by you bringing us deliverance.  
For now all of us are afraid as we behold  
That he who is guiding our vessel is wounded.

*[Enter Messenger]*

MESSENGER

Is it from you, stranger, that I might learn where  
Is the dwelling of King Oedipus:  
Or, more particularly, if you have knowledge of where he himself is?

CHORUS

Here are his chambers, stranger, and he himself is within.

But here is his wife and mother of his children.

MESSENGER

May she always prosper in her prospering descent

Since by them her marriage is complete.

JOCASTA

And may you, also, stranger, because of your worthy eloquence.

But explain to me what you seek in arriving here

Or what it is that you wish to make known.

MESSENGER

What is profitable, my lady, for both your family and your husband.

JOCASTA

What is it? And who sent you here, to us?

MESSENGER

I am from Corinth. And when, presently, I have said my speech,

There will be joy - of that I have no doubt - but also an equal sorrowing.

JOCASTA

How can that be? What has a double strength that it could cause that?

MESSENGER

He, as their King: for they who inhabit the land

940 Of Isthmia would make him so - so they have said.

JOCASTA

How is that? For is not Polybus, the Elder, their Master?

MESSENGER

Not now - because death holds him in a tomb.

JOCASTA

What are you saying? That the father of Oedipus - has died?

MESSENGER

Is my report is not correct, then I merit death.

JOCASTA

Swiftly - my handmaiden - go to your master

To tell him this. You prophecies from the gods! -

Where is your reality? This was the man whom Oedipus long ago from fear

Avoided lest he kill him. And now it is because

Of his own destiny that he died rather than through that of another.

*[Enter Oedipus]*

OEDIPUS

My Lady, Jocasta:

Why did you summon me here from my chamber?

JOCASTA

Hear this man and, as you listen, watch to where  
It is that those solemn prophecies of the gods lead.

OEDIPUS

What report has he - wherever he is from - for me?

JOCASTA

He is from Corinth with the message that your father  
Polybus is no more - he is dead.

OEDIPUS

Then announce it, stranger - leading it out yourself, old one.

MESSENGER

If that is what I must relate first and clearly

Then know well that his death has come upon him.

OEDIPUS

960 Was it by treachery - or by dealing with sickness?

MESSENGER

A small turn downwards, and the ageing body lies in sleep.

OEDIPUS

Am I to assume that he unfortunately perished from a sickness?

MESSENGER

Indeed - for he had been allocated a great many seasons.

OEDIPUS

Ah! Then why, my lady, look toward

The altar of some Pythian prophet, or above to those

Screeching birds - whose guidance was that I would

Assuredly kill my father? But he is dead

And hidden within the earth, while I am here

Without having to clean my spear. Unless - it was a longing for me

Which destroyed him, and thus he is dead because of me.

But then - that divine prophecy has been, by that circumstance, taken away

By Polybus lying in Hades, and thus has no importance.

JOCASTA

Did I not declare such things to you, just now?

OEDIPUS

Such was said - but I turned away because of my fear of them.

JOCASTA

Do not anymore wound your heart by such things.

OEDIPUS

But how can I not distance myself from that intercourse with my mother?

JOCASTA

What is there for mortals to fear, for it is chance

Which rules over them, and who can clearly foresee what does not exist?

It is most excellent to live without a plan - according to one's ability.

980 You should not fear being married to your mother:

For many are the mortals who have - in dreams also -

Lain with their mothers, and he to whom such things as these

Are as nothing, provides himself with a much easier life.

OEDIPUS

All that you expressed is fine, except for this:

She who gave me birth is alive, and since she is now still living,

It is necessary that I - despite your fine words - distance myself from her.

JOCASTA

Yet the death of your father is a great revelation for you.

OEDIPUS

Yes - a great one. But I fear she who is living.

MESSENGER

Who is this woman that you so fear?

OEDIPUS

990 Meropè, old one: she who belonged with Polybus.

MESSENGER

And what, concerning her, could produce fear in you?

OEDIPUS

A strange god-inspired prophecy.

MESSENGER

Is it forbidden for someone else to know - or can it be told?



OEDIPUS

Certainly. Once, Loxias said to me  
That I must copulate with my own mother  
And by my own hands take my father's blood.  
Therefore, and long ago, I left Corinth  
And have kept far away from there. And good fortune has been mine,  
Although it is very pleasing to behold the eye's of one's parents.

MESSENGER

Was that what distanced you from your clan?

OEDIPUS

Yes, old one: I did not want to slaughter my father.

MESSENGER

Then why, my Lord, have I not released you from that fear -  
Since I came here as a favour to you?

OEDIPUS

Certainly you would merit receiving a reward from me.

MESSENGER

And that was chiefly why I came here -  
That on your arrival home I would obtain something useful.

OEDIPUS

But I will not rejoin those who planted me.

MESSENGER

My son! It is clearly evident you cannot see what you are doing -

OEDIPUS

Why, old one? Before the gods, enlighten me!

MESSENGER

1010 - If it was because of that, that you avoided returning to your home.

OEDIPUS

Yes, out of respect for Phoebus so that what he explained could not be fulfilled.

MESSENGER

A defilement brought to you by they who planted you?

OEDIPUS

That, Elder, is the thing I have always feared.

MESSENGER

Then you should know that there is nothing to make you tremble.

OEDIPUS

Nothing? Why - if I was the child born to them?

MESSENGER

Because you and Polybus are not kin by blood.

OEDIPUS

Are you saying that Polybus did not sire me?

MESSENGER

The same as but no more than this man, here!

OEDIPUS

How can he who sired me be the same as he who did not?

MESSENGER

1020 Because he did not beget you - as I did not.

OEDIPUS

But then why did he name me as his son?

MESSENGER

Know that you were accepted from my hands as a gift.

OEDIPUS

And he strongly loved what came from the hand of another?

MESSENGER

He was persuaded because before then he was without children.

OEDIPUS

When I was given to him - had you purchased or begotten me?

MESSENGER

You were found in a forest valley on Cithaeron.

OEDIPUS

And why were you travelling in that region?

MESSENGER

I was there to oversee the mountain sheep.

OEDIPUS

A shepherd - who wandered in search of work?

MESSENGER

Yes - and that season the one who, my son, was your saviour.

OEDIPUS

What ailment possessed me when you took me into your hands?

MESSENGER

The joints of your feet are evidence of it.

OEDIPUS

What makes you speak of that old defect?

MESSENGER

I undid what held and pierced your ankles.

OEDIPUS

A strange disgrace - to carry such a token with me.

MESSENGER

Such was the fortune that named you who you are.

OEDIPUS

Before the gods, tell me whether that thing was done by my father or my mother.

MESSENGER

I do not know - he who gave you to me would be the best judge of that.

OEDIPUS

What? From someone else? Then it was not by chance you found me?

MESSENGER

1040 No - another shepherd gave you to me.

OEDIPUS

Who was it? Can you point him out? Tell whom you saw?

MESSENGER

He was perhaps named among those of Laius.

OEDIPUS

He who once and long ago was King of this land?

MESSENGER

Yes - that man was his shepherd.

OEDIPUS

Is he then still living? Is it possible for me to see him?

MESSENGER

You who are of this region would know that best.

OEDIPUS

Is there among you here, anyone

Whoever he might be, who knows this shepherd he speaks of

Or who has seen him either here or in the wilds?

1050 If so, declare it - for here is the opportunity to find out about these things.

CHORUS

I believe he is that one in the wilds

Whom you sought before to see.

But it is Jocasta - for certain - who could tell of him.

OEDIPUS

My lady - do you know if it is he who, before,

We desired to return to here? Is that the one about whom this person speaks?

JOCASTA

The one he spoke about? Why? Do not return to it

Nor even desire to attend again to this idle talk!

OEDIPUS

It could never be that I would fail to grasp

These proofs which will shed light upon my origin.

JOCASTA

Before the gods! If you value your own life,  
Do not seek that. I have enough pain now.

OEDIPUS

Have courage - for even if my three mothers past  
Were shown to be three slaves, you would not be the one exposed as low-born.

JOCASTA

I beseech you to be persuaded by me. Do not do this.

OEDIPUS

I cannot be persuaded not to learn of this for certain.

JOCASTA

Yet my judgement is for your good - it is said for the best.

OEDIPUS

This "for the best" pained me before and does so again.

JOCASTA

You, the unlucky one - may you never find out who you are.



OEDIPUS

Someone go and bring that Shepherd here to me,  
1070 For she can still rejoice in her distinguished origins.

JOCASTA

You are doomed: this and this alone will I  
Say to you - and nothing hereafter!

*[Exit Jocasta]*

CHORUS

Why, Oedipus, has your lady gone, taken away  
By some wild affliction? I am in awe  
Of a misfortune bursting forth because of her silence about this.

OEDIPUS

It is necessary that it does burst forth. However lowly  
My seed may be, it is my wish to know about it.  
Although she is a woman, she has a mature judgement -  
But even so, perhaps she is ashamed of my low-born origins.  
But I - who apportion myself a child of the goddess, Fortuna,  
She of beneficence - will not become dishonoured,  
For She was the mother who gave me birth: my kinsfolk  
The moons which separated my greatness and my lowness.  
As this is the nature of my being, I cannot ever go away from it

To another, and so not learn about my birth.

## CHORUS

If indeed I am a prophet or skillful in reason,  
Then - by Olympus! - you shall not be without the experience,  
O Cithaeron, on the rising of the full moon,  
Of me exalting you - the kinsfolk of Oedipus,  
His mother and provider - by my choral-dance  
Since a joy has been brought to my King.  
Phoebus - I invoke you, that this may also be pleasing to you!

Who, my son, of those whose living in years is long,  
Did the mountain-wanderer Pan come down upon  
To be your father? Or was it Loxias who slept with a woman?  
For agreeable to him are all those who inhabit the wilds!  
Or perhaps it was he who is the sovereign of Cyllene:  
Or he the mountain-summit dwelling god of those Bacchinities  
Who gladly received you who was found by one of those Helicon Nymphs  
With whom he so often plays!

## OEDIPUS

1110 If it fitting for me - who has never had dealings with him -  
To make an estimate, Elders, then I believe I see that Shepherd  
Whom we saught before. For his great age  
Would conform and be in accord with that of this man.  
Also, those who are escorting him are servants

Of my own family. But, about this, your experience  
Has the advantage over mine since you have seen that Shepherd before.

CHORUS

I see him clearly - and, yes, I know him. For if Laius ever had  
A faithful Shepherd, it was this man.

*[Enter Shepherd]*

OEDIPUS

You, the stranger from Corinth, I question you first -  
Is this he whom you talked about.

MESSENGER

Indeed - you behold him.

OEDIPUS

You there, old man! Here, look at me, and answer  
My questions. Did you once belong to Laius?

SHEPHERD

Yes - nourished by him, not purchased as a slave.

OEDIPUS

What work did you share in or was your livelihood?

SHEPHERD

For the greater part, my living was the way of a shepherd.

OEDIPUS

And in what region did you mostly dwell with them?

SHEPHERD

It was Cithaeron - and also neighbouring regions.

OEDIPUS

This man here - did you ever observe him there and come to know him?

SHEPHERD

Doing what? Which is the man you speak of?

OEDIPUS

This one, standing there. Did you have dealings with him?

SHEPHERD

Not as I recall - so as to speak about now.

MESSENGER

That is no wonder, your Lordship. But I shall bring light

Upon those things which are now unknown. For well do I know

That he will see again that region of Cithaeron when he  
With a double flock and I with one  
Were neighbours and comrades for three entire six month  
Durations from Spring to Arcturus.  
Then for the Winter I would drive mine to my stables  
And he, his, to the pens of Laius.

1140 Was this, of which I have spoken, done or not as I have spoken?

SHEPHERD

Your words disclose it - although it is from long ago.

MESSENGER

Well, now say you know that you offered me a boy,  
A nursling to rear as my own.

SHEPHERD

What do you mean? What do you ask me for?

MESSENGER

This, sir, is he who was that youngster!

SHEPHERD

May misfortune come to you! Why do you not keep silent?

OEDIPUS

You - old man. Do not restrain him for it is your speech  
Which should be more restrained, not his.

SHEPHERD

Most noble Lord - what is my fault?

OEDIPUS

1150 In not telling of the child he asked about.

SHEPHERD

But he speaks without looking as he toils without an aim.

OEDIPUS

If you will not speak as a favour, you will when you cry-out.

SHEPHERD

Before the gods, do not strike someone who is old.

OEDIPUS

Swiftly, one of you, twist his hands behind his back.

SHEPHERD

You unlucky one! What more do you desire to learn from me?

OEDIPUS

Did you give him that child he asked about?

SHEPHERD

I did. And it would have been to my advantage to die that day.

OEDIPUS

It will come to that if your words are not true.

SHEPHERD

Yet much more will be destroyed if I do speak.

OEDIPUS

1160 This man, it seems, pushes for a delay.

SHEPHERD

I do not. Just now I said I gave him.

OEDIPUS

Taken from where? Your abode - or from that of another?

SHEPHERD

Not from my own; I received him from someone.

OEDIPUS

Who - of these clansmen here? From whose dwelling?

SHEPHERD

Your lordship, before the gods do not ask me more.

OEDIPUS

You die if I have to put that question to you again.

SHEPHERD

Then - it was one of those fathered by Laius.

OEDIPUS

From a slave? Or born from one of his own race?

SHEPHERD

Ah! Here before me is what I dread. Of speaking it...

OEDIPUS

1170 And I, of hearing it, although hear it I must.



SHEPHERD

It was said to be his own child. But of these things,  
It is your lady - who is within - who could best speak of them.

OEDIPUS

Why? Because she gave it to you?

SHEPHERD

Indeed, Lord.

OEDIPUS

Why did she want that?

SHEPHERD

So it would be destroyed.

OEDIPUS

How grievous for she who bore the child!

SHEPHERD

Yes - but she dreaded divine prophecies of ill-omen.

OEDIPUS

Which were?

SHEPHERD

The word was that he would kill his parents.

OEDIPUS

Then why did you let this elderly one take him.

MESSENGER

Because, your lordship, of mercy - so that to another land

He might fittingly convey it: to where he himself came from.

1180 But he saved him for this mighty wound. If then you are

The one he declares you to be, know how unlucky was your birth!

OEDIPUS

Ah! All that was possible has, with certainty, passed away.

You - daylight - I now look my last at what I behold by you:

I, exposed as born from those who should not have borne me -

As having been intimate with those I should not, and killed those I should not.

*[Exit Oedipus, Shepherd and Messenger]*

CHORUS

You descendants of mortals -

I count your zest as being equivalent to nothing,

For where is the person  
Who has won more from a lucky daimon  
Than just that appearance of fame  
Which later is peeled away?  
Yours - your daimon, Oedipus the unlucky -  
We hold as an example  
That nothing mortal is favoured.

For, O Zeus, it was beyond the bounds of others  
That he shot his arrow to win  
An all-prospering lucky daimon:  
He who in destroying that virginal chantress of oracles  
With the curved claws,  
Arose in my country as a defence against death.  
And who since then has been called my Lord  
And greatly honoured as the chief of Thebes the magnificent!

But now - who has heard of a greater misfortune?  
Who is there so savagely ruined that he dwells with such troubles  
With his life so changed?  
Alas - Oedipus, the renowned!  
A mature haven  
Was enough for you  
As child and father when you fell upon  
That woman in her inner chamber!  
1210 How, how could what your father pushed into

Have the vigour for you for so long and in silence?

Chronos, the all-seeing, has found you, beyond your own will,  
For long ago it was determined that from that marriage which was no marriage  
Those children who have been born were the children that would be born.

But - as being the son of Laius,  
I wish, I wish that I had never known this.  
For I lament, and my cry is above all the others  
As it comes forth from my mouth.  
To speak straight: you gave me breath again  
But I allowed my eyes to sleep.

*[Enter Second Messenger]*

MESSENGER

You who in this land have always been esteemed the most!  
What deeds you are to hear - what behold! - and how much grief  
Will weigh upon you if, on fidelity to your origins,  
Your concern is still for the family of Labdacus!  
For, alas, neither the Ister nor the Phasis  
Can wash clean these chambers, so much suffering  
Do they conceal - soon to be exposed to the light  
1230 As willed, not done outside the aid of will. Those injuries  
Which bring the most grieving, are those shown to be of our own choice.

## CHORUS

What I knew before could not fail to make my grieving  
Anything but grave; after that - what could you announce?

## MESSENGER

What is a quick tale to say  
And to understand: the divinity, Jocasta, is dead.

## CHORUS

A misfortune! From what cause?

## MESSENGER

By she herself. But, of those events,  
What was most painful is not for you - for you did not view them.  
Yet - as long as my Muse is with me -  
1240 You can learn of the sufferings of her fate.

She - coloured by emotion - passed within the hall  
To run straight to that bridal-bed of hers  
Tearing at her hair with the fingers of both her hands.  
Then, she went within - thrusting the doors closed -  
To invoke Laius, he who long ago was a corpse,  
Recalling that seed she received long ago by which  
He was killed, to leave her to produce  
Unlucky children from his own begotten child.

She lamented the bed of her double misfortune:  
From her husband, a husband - and children from that child.

How, after that, she perished, I did not see  
For with a war-cry Oedipus pushed in - and, because of him,  
We did not behold the end of her suffering.  
To him, we looked as he ploughed around  
For wildly he ranged about, demanding his spear,  
His lady who was not his lady, and where he might find that maternal  
Double-womb which produced he himself and his children.  
He was frenzied, and a daimon guided him -  
For it was no man who was standing nearby -  
And with a fearful shout - as if someone led the way -  
He was propelled into those double-doors and, from their supports,  
Bent those hollow barriers to fall into her chamber.

And there we beheld that lady suspended  
In the swinging braided cords by which she had stricken herself.  
He, seeing this, with a fearful roar of grief  
Let down the cords which suspended her. Then when she the unfortunate  
Was lain on the ground, there was something dreadful to behold:  
For he tore from her those gold brooches  
With which she had adorned herself  
And raised them to assault his own circular organs,  
Speaking such as this: that they would not have sight of  
Those troubles he had suffered or had caused

But would henceforth and in darkness have sight of what  
They should not and what he himself should not have had knowledge of.  
Then with a awesome lament not once but frequently  
He raised them to strike into his eyes. At each, blood  
From his eyes dropped to his beard, not releasing blood  
Drop by drop - but all at once:  
A dark storm hailing drops of blood.

1280 From those two has this burst forth - not on one  
But on that man and his lady, joined by these troubles.  
That old prosperity anciently theirs was indeed once  
A worthy prosperity - but now, on this day, there is  
Lamentation, misfortune, death, disgrace, and of all those troubles  
That exist and which have names, there is not one which is not here.

#### CHORUS

Does he who suffers now rest from injury?

#### MESSENGER

He shouts for the barriers to be opened to expose  
To all who are of Cadmus, this patricide,  
This mother... - I will not say the profanity he speaks -  
So he can cast himself from this land, and not remain  
For this dwelling to become cursed because of his curse.

But he requires strength and a guide  
For too great for him to carry is that burden  
Which he will make known to you. You will behold a spectacle  
Which even those to whom it is horrible, will make lament for.

*[Enter the blind Oedipus]*

CHORUS

How strange for mortals to see such an accident as this!  
It is the strangest thing of all ever  
To come before me. You - who suffer this -  
1300 What fury came upon you? What daimon  
With great leaps from a great height  
Came upon you bringing such an unfortunate fate?  
I lament for your bad-luck.  
Though I am not able to look at you -  
There is much I wish to ask, much to understand,  
Much to know  
Even though I am here, shivering.

OEDIPUS

I am in agony!  
To where, in my misery, am I carried? To where  
Is my voice conveyed as it flees from me?  
You - that daimon! To where have you brought me?



CHORUS

Somewhere strange with nothing to be heard and nothing to be seen.

OEDIPUS

Nothing announced the arrival of this dark cloud shrouding me!

Something unconquerable - brought by an unfavourable wind.

As one do the stings of those goads,

And the recalling of those troubles, pierce me!

CHORUS

It is no surprise that because of such injuries

1320 You endure a double mourning and a double misfortune.

OEDIPUS

My friend!

You, at least, are my steadfast comrade

Because you have the endurance to attend to the blind.

For you are not hidden from me - I clearly know,

Even in this darkness, that it is your voice.

CHORUS

You of strange deeds - how did you bear

To so extinguish your sight? What daimon carried you away?

OEDIPUS

It was Apollo - Apollo, my friend,  
Who brought such troubles to such a troubled end.  
But it was my own hand, and no other, which made the assault -  
I, who suffer this. For why should I have sight  
When there was nothing pleasing to see?

CHORUS

These things are as you have said they are.

OEDIPUS

Who could I behold?  
Who could be loved - or whose greeting,  
My friend, would be delightful to hear?  
1340 So, and swiftly, send me away from this place.  
Send away, my friend, this great pest -  
This bringer of a curse: the mortal whom our gods  
Detest the most.

CHORUS

You are as helpless in that resolve as you were in your misfortune:  
Thus I wish you had never come to know of those things!

OEDIPUS

May death come to whosoever while roaming those grasslands loosened

Those cruel fetters and so safely pulled me away from death!  
For it was not a favourable deed.  
For had I died then no grief such as this  
Would have been caused to either me or my kin.

CHORUS

I also wish that.

OEDIPUS

I would not, then, have shed the blood of my father  
As I journeyed, and not be named by mortals  
As the husband of she who gave me my birth.  
1360 I am without a god - an unconsecrated child -  
And now of the same kind as he who gave me this miserable existence!  
If there is a trouble which is even older than these troubles,  
Then it will be the lot of Oedipus.

CHORUS

I do not know if I could say that your intentions were right,  
For it is perhaps better to no longer exist than to live, blind.

OEDIPUS

But as to this being done for the best -  
You should not instruct me, nor offer me more advice.  
For, if I had eyes, I would not know where to look

When I went to Hades and saw my father  
Or my unfortunate mother, since to both  
I have done what is so outstanding that a strangling is excluded.  
Perhaps the sight of children is desirable:  
To behold how those buds are mine will grow -  
But it would certainly not be to these eyes of mine.  
Nor would that of this town, or its towers, or the sacrifices  
Offered to daimons. For it was most unfortunate that I -  
Who as no one else in Thebes prospered most excellently -  
Bereaved myself of such things by my own declaration  
That everyone must push aside the profane one - the one the gods  
Have exposed as unclean and of the clan of Laius.  
After I have made known this, my stain,  
How could I look those here straight in the eye?  
Certainly I could not. And if what is heard could be blocked out  
At that source in my ears, I would not have held myself back  
From this miserable body and thus would be blind and also hear nothing!  
For it is pleasing to dwell away from concern about injury.

Why, Cithaeron - why did you receive me, and having accepted,  
Not directly kill me so I would never make known  
To mortals whence I was born?  
O Polybus and Corinth - and you that others called the ancient clan-home  
Of my ancestors - I, the beauty that you reared  
Had bad wounds festering underneath!  
For I am found to be defective having been defective from my birth.

You three routes and concealed valley,  
You grove and narrow place of the three-fold paths:  
1400 You took in from my hands that blood which was my father's  
But also mine - so perhaps you can still recall  
Those deeds that I did there, and then, when here,  
What I also achieved? You - those rites of joy  
Which gave me my birth and which planted me anew  
By the same seed being shot up to manifest fathers,  
Brothers, sons - the blood of a kinsman -  
Brides, wives, mothers: as much shame  
As can arise from deeds among mortals.

No one should speak about things they do not favour doing.  
Swiftly then - before the gods and beyond here -  
Hide me away or kill me or upon the sea cast me  
So that you will never look upon me again.  
Come, and dignify this unhappy man by your touch.  
Be persuaded - do not fear. For this misfortune is mine alone  
And no mortal except me can bear it.

*[Enter Creon]*

CHORUS

As to this request of yours - it is fitting that here is Creon  
To act and give advice,

For he alone is left to be guardian of this region in your place.

OEDIPUS

But what is there than I can say to him?

What trust can with fairness be shown to me?

1420 For I am discovered as being false to him, previously, in everything.

CREON

I did not come here, Oedipus, to laugh

Nor to blame you for your previous error.

*[Creon turns to speak to the crowd who have gathered]*

You - there - even if you do not honour those descended from mortals,

Have respect for the all-nourishing flames of the Lord Helios

So that this stain is not looked upon when it is uncovered -

This which neither our soil nor the sacred waters

Nor daylight will welcome.

Swiftly now take him into his chambers:

For the most proper conduct is that only kinfolk

Look at and hear a kinsman's faults.

OEDIPUS

Before the gods - since you have torn from me a dread

By you coming here - you, the most noble - to me, a most ignoble man,

Yield me something. I say this not for myself, but for you.

CREON

What favour do you request so earnestly?

OEDIPUS

That you throw me from this land as swiftly as you can

To where it is known there will be not one mortal to greet me.

CREON

Know that this would certainly have been done - were it not necessary

For me first to learn from the god what I should do.

OEDIPUS

1440 But his saying was completely clear -

That I, the disrespectful one, the patricide, must depart.

CREON

Those were the words - but since our needs have changed

It is better to learn what must be done.

OEDIPUS

But you will enquire of behalf of this unhappy man?

CREON

Yes - as you should now pay tribute to the god.

## OEDIPUS

Certainly - and I rely on you for this supplication:

That you give to she who is within, a tomb such as you might desire

To lay yourself in - for it is correct to so perform this on behalf of your own.

As for me - never once let it be deemed fitting, while I happen to live,

For this my father's town to have me within it.

Instead, let me dwell in the mountains - to where is Cithaeron

Renowned because of me; for my mother and my father

While they lived appointed it the tomb I would lay in.

Thus, there I will depart, killed as they desired.

Yet I do know that neither a sickness

Nor anything similar will destroy me, for I would never have been saved

From that death unless it was for some horrible injury.

Hence I shall await that destiny which is mine - whatever its nature.

As for my sons - do not, Creon, add them

1460 To your care. For they are men, and therefore will never

Lack the ability - wherever they are - to survive.

But as for those unfortunate ones, my girls

For whom my table of food was never separate from

Nor who were ever without me, so that whatever I touched

Would be shared between us -

Attend to them, for me.

Would that you could let my hands touch them

And they lament for my injuries.



Let these things be, Lord -  
Let them be so, you of this noble race.  
For if my hands could reach them  
I would believe they were mine just as when I had my sight.

*[Enter Antigone and Ismene]*

What is this?  
Before the gods! - Do I not hear those whom I love,  
Weeping? Has Creon let them make lament for me,  
Sending here those who are dearest to me - my daughters?  
Is this right?

CREON

It is right. For I prepared this for you.  
I conjectured this - your present delight - since it has possessed you before.

OEDIPUS

Then good fortune to you on your path -  
And may you be guarded by a better daimon than was my fate!

1480 My children - where are you? Come here - here  
To these my hands of he who is your brother:  
These of he who planted you and which assisted your father

To see in this way with what before were clear eyes.  
He, my children, who sees nothing, who enquires about nothing -  
He who is exposed as fathering you from where he himself was sown.  
Even though I cannot behold you, I lament for you  
Because I know of the bitter life left to you  
Which mortals will cause you to live.  
For what gathering of townsfolk could you go to?  
What festivals - from where you would not return, lamenting,  
To your dwelling instead of watching the spectacle?  
And when you become ripe for marriage  
Who is there who exists, my children, who would chance it -  
Accepting the rebukes that will as painful for they who begat me  
As they will be for you?  
For what injury is not here? Your father killed his father;  
He seeded her who had brought him forth  
And from where he himself was sown  
You were born - in the same way he himself was acquired.

1500 Such as this will you be rebuked with. Who then will marry you?  
Such a person does not exist. No, my children, it is without doubt  
That you must go to waste unsown and unmarried.

Son of Menoeceus! You are the only father  
Who is left to them, for we who planted them are destroyed:  
Both of us. Watch that they do not wander  
As beggars, without a man, since they are of your family -

Or that they become the equal of me in misfortune.

Rather, favour them because you see them at such an age as this,  
Deserted by everyone - except for yourself.

Agree to this, noble lord, and touch me with your hand.

And you, my children - had you judgement, I would even now  
Have given you much advice. As it is, let your supplication be  
To live where it is allowed and to obtain a life more agreeable  
Than that of the father who planted you.

CREON

Let this abundance of lamentation pass away - and go into those chambers.

OEDIPUS

I shall obey, although it is not pleasing.

CREON

All fine things have their season.

OEDIPUS

Do you know my conditions for going?

CREON

Speak them - and I, having heard them, will know.

OEDIPUS

Send me far from this land.

CREON

That gift comes from the gods.

OEDIPUS

But the gods must detest me!

CREON

Then swiftly will your wish be fulfilled.

OEDIPUS

1520 But do you grant this?

CREON

I have no desire to speak idly about things I cannot judge.

OEDIPUS

Then now lead me from here.

CREON

Move away from your children - and go.

OEDIPUS

But do not take them from me.

CREON

Do not desire to be master in all things:

For you are without the strength which assisted you during your life.

CHORUS

You who dwell in my fatherland, Thebes, observe - here is Oedipus,

He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man:

What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy?

But what a tide of problems have come over him!

Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals

To observe that particular day - calling no one lucky until,

Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.

---

**cc David Wulstan Myatt 1990, 2013**

This work is issued under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

# **SOPHOCLES**

## **ANTIGONE**

**A Translation  
by  
David Wulstan Myatt**

## Preface

The main aims of the present translation are to provide an accurate and poetic rendering in a style suitable for both reading and dramatic performance, and enable readers without a knowledge of ancient Greek to understand why Greek drama has been highly regarded for thousands of years. As often with Sophocles and Aeschylus, it is the Choral Odes which we most often admire and quote, as in:

By Cyanaei of the two-fold sea  
Are the Bosphorus shores  
And Thracian Salmydessus  
Where Ares, dwelling close by the citadel,  
Beheld the two sons of Phineas  
Blinded by ruinous wounds  
Dealt by that savage second wife -  
A blinding of orbs the seeing of which brought vengeance -  
By sticking at them with the points  
Of her weaver's spindle, blood staining her hands.

Antigone,  
v.966f

The layout of the translation generally follows the line structure of the Greek, although for grammatical and dramatic reasons I have sometimes rendered one line of Greek as two English ones, and occasionally written one English line for two Greek ones. The numbers in the margin refer to the Greek text and are given for guidance.

The text used is that of R.D. Dawe [*Sophoclis Tragoedia, Tom.II, Teubner, 1985*] although in a few places I have used other readings.

DW Myatt  
1990  
(Revised 1994)



## Introduction

The 'Antigone' of Sophocles - which follows his 'Oedipus the King' and 'Oedipus at Colonus' - seems, at first glance, to be concerned with the conflict between Antigone, the daughter of Oedipus, and Creon, the new ruler of the community at Thebes, who was the brother of Jocasta, the mother and wife of Oedipus.

Polynices and Eteocles, the two sons of Oedipus (and thus the brothers of Antigone, and her sister, Ismene), had quarrelled with Polynices leaving Thebes and returning with an attacking force which he hoped would take the fortified citadel, defended by Eteocles. In the ensuing battle, Polynices and Eteocles fought and killed each other, with the attackers routed and forced to flee.

One of Creon's first edicts, as ruler of Thebes, is to forbid anyone to bury or mourn for Polynices. This edict goes against the established custom which permitted those foes fallen in battle to be honoured by their relatives with the customary rites and then buried.

Antigone defies this edict even though she knows her disobedience will mean her own death. She believes that the ancient customs, given by the gods and which thus honour the gods, have priority over any edict or law made by a mortal, and that thus it is her duty to observe these customs.

The reality, however, is that the 'Antigone' is not a tragedy concerned with individual characters, with their motivations, feelings, ideas and so on. It is not, for instance, a drama about a conflict between two different personalities - Antigone and Creon - both of whom are self-willed and determined.

Rather, this tragedy deals with the relation between mortals and gods. The work is an exploration and explanation of the workings of the cosmos, and the answers given express the distinctive ancient Greek 'outlook' or ethos. This ethos is pagan, and its essence may be said to be that there are limits to human behaviour; that some conduct is wise, some conduct is unwise. Unwise conduct invites retribution by the gods: it can and often does result in personal misfortune, in bad luck.

This outlook does not therefore involve monotheistic notions like an abstract "good" and "evil". The Greeks strove to emulate a human ideal, and, through the pursuit of *arête*, to emulate and celebrate the best. Their ideals or 'archetypes' were those considered to be the most heroic, the most beautiful, the most excellent, individuals of their communities. But in their pursuit of this excellence they were careful not to "overstep the mark", to be excessive, to commit 'hubris', or 'insolence' toward the gods. Such insolence was a violation of the customs which created and maintained the warrior communities, with these customs being regarded as given by the gods. By honouring these customs, the gods themselves were honoured and the very fabric of the

communities maintained. Thus, a noble human balance was maintained.

Of course, there were times of excess, as there were individuals who were excessive. But it was recognized that such excesses were unwise, for they would, sooner or later, be paid for. In effect, this outlook or ethos was that of individuals aware of the power of Fate, of the gods, and created and maintained a certain personal character evident whenever one reads Homer, Sophocles, Aeschylus, and other Greek writers, or views any Greek sculpture or painting. The essentially archetypal Greek man, for instance, was an intelligent, reasoning, proud, vigorous, warrior who for the most part respected the gods, who believed in prophetic oracles, and who honoured the customs of their ancestors. Fundamentally, such a person was human, able to enjoy life and its pleasures, but aware (from personal experience) of death, suffering, the power of Fate and of the gods.

What many of us admire so much about the ancient Greeks was this balance between a pagan joy and enthusiasm, and an understanding and acceptance of Fate, of the power of the gods, and in the rightly-famed Choral Ode of the Antigone (vv. 332ff ) Sophocles calls such a man the "thinking warrior", the all-resourceful one who, however, was still mindful that their good fortune, their health, their victories, and their life, depended on the gods.

ooo

*Characters:*

Antigone

Ismene

Chorus of Theban Elders

Creon

A Watchman

Haemon

Tiresias

A Messenger

Eurydice

*Scene:* Before the wealthy dwelling of Creon at Thebes

ooo

## **Antigone**

*[ Antigone and Ismene enter]*

### **Antigone**

Ismene, my own sister by blood,  
Do you see how Zeus fulfills in us  
While we live the woes of Oedipus?  
There is no pain, no affliction, no shame  
Nor dishonour that is not present  
Among your suffering and mine.

And what of this new proclamation  
By the General to all the people?  
Have you heard - and know what it means?  
Or do you not understand how the suffering  
Of our foe now comes to our clan?

### **Ismene**

I have heard of nothing told of our folk, Antigone,  
Whether grievous or good since we two  
Lost our two brothers killed in one day

By their own two hands.

And since the Argive army fled this same night

I have heard nothing to give me more sorrow or joy.

### **Antigone**

Such was my thought and thus I summoned you

Beyond the courtyard gate so only you can hear this.

### **Ismene**

20 What is it? For I see you colour changed.

### **Antigone**

It is that Creon has given burial honour

To only one of our brothers, leaving the other dishonoured!

Eteocles, it is reported, has with rightful justice

Been concealed in earth to thus be given tribute

By the dead below. But pitiful is the death of Polynices

For by royal decree no one may cover him,

Lament his death or weep

But must leave him unburied as a welcome feast

For carrion birds to eat as they will.

Such, they say, is the proclamation of Creon "*the noble*"

For you and me. For me! And soon shall he be here

To proclaim this directly to those who have not heard.

He does not hold this as of no worth

Since whosoever disobeys the edict  
Shall - by a public stoning in the citadel - be murdered!

Thus things are - and now you shall swiftly show  
If you are noble or will debase the race that gave you birth!

**Ismene**

But what, my grieving sister, can I do  
40 To loosen or make the knot?

**Antigone**

Will you work with me to do the deed?

**Ismene**

To attempt what? Where is your thought leading?

**Antigone**

With your hand help me raise the corpse.

**Ismene**

You intend to bury him though our folk forbid it?

**Antigone**

He is mine, as yours - though you wish he was not:  
*I shall never betray a brother.*

**Ismene**

How reckless, when Creon has spoken against it!

**Antigone**

He cannot keep me from my own!

**Ismene**

Have thought, sister, of how our father,  
Dishonoured and abhorred, was destroyed:  
He convicted himself of wrong and by his own hands  
With his own act struck out both his eyes.  
Then his mother and wife - two names for one -  
With a coiled rope made a failure of her life.  
And third - our two brothers in one day  
Slaughtered themselves when their own hands  
Were raised each against their kin.

Consider now that we alone remain -  
Pitifully shall we perish if we defy the decree  
60 Or the power of our King.  
Reflect that we are women, not disposed  
By our nature to strive against men -  
For the stronger rule, and therefore we should listen  
To such orders, and those that are worse.

I thus ask the pardon of those below  
Since in these things I have no power  
And must therefore obey those in authority.  
To be excessive is unwise.

### **Antigone**

No more shall I exhort you, and even if another day  
You wished it, I would not welcome your sharing  
In the deed! Be as you are; as for me, I shall bury him  
Since it is beautiful to die doing such a thing:  
I shall lie by he whom I love who loves me,  
I - the villain sanctioned by the gods. For I have  
More seasons to spend pleasing those below  
Than those here since I shall lie there forever.  
But if you deem it, then dishonour  
What the gods themselves honour.

### **Ismene**

I do not dishonour them: I have no strength  
And cannot act against the folk.

### **Antigone**

80 So you say; I shall go alone to raise  
A burial mound over my beloved brother.

**Ismene**

You unhappy woman! I fear for you.

**Antigone**

Have no anxiety for me. Follow your own Destiny.

**Ismene**

If you must - then do not announce the deed

But keep it secret, as I shall.

**Antigone**

No, announce it! I shall detest you more

If you keep silent and do not proclaim it to all.

**Ismene**

A hot heart you have for cold things.

**Antigone**

I appease those whom it is necessary to please.

**Ismene**

Indeed, if it can be done - but your desire is impossible.



**Antigone**

If so, I shall stop only when strength fails.

**Ismene**

But to begin a hopeless quest is not cunning.

**Antigone**

Do not speak so, or you will become my foe

And then, justly, the lasting foe of the dead.

Now leave me to my 'mistaken' counsel

For I shall suffer nothing as terrible

As a dishonourable death if I should die.

**Ismene**

Go then, if resolved: but know that although foolish,

Those who love you will love you still.

*[Exit Antigone and Ismene;*

*Enter Chorus ]*

**Chorus**

Ray of the sun, most beautiful light

Ever to shine upon seven-Gated Thebes -

As a golden eye opening over Dirce's streams

Have you revealed how the white-shielded Argive warrior

In full armour  
Swiftly fled with bridle whistling.

Against our soil quarrelling Polynices  
Came forth  
Shrilly screaming  
As an eagle soaring over our land  
On wings white like snow;  
With many weapons  
And helmet of horse-hair crest  
He lingered over roofs - blood-seeking and gaping wide -  
To circle with spears the seven gates:  
But then was gone  
Before his jaws were stained by our blood  
Or the pine-fire torches burnt the circle of our towers  
Because the clash of Ares sounded against him  
Since the dragon he found was a difficult foe  
To subdue!

For Zeus greatly hates the over-boasting tongue  
And watched them gushing forth -  
Their gold clanging in pride -  
Before He hurled the fire that He holds  
At he shouting victory  
As he rushed up to those posts  
That were his prize!

Swaying then, he fell to beat against earth -

This fire-bearer who with madness

Rushed in Bacchic frenzy

To breathe against us winds of hate.

Thus, what he wished, was not

140 While to the others great Ares with vigour

Delivered his blows.

Their seven Chiefs were each at our seven gates opposed,

And forced to leave their bronze

As offerings to Zeus, router-of-foes:

Save for those two unhappy ones born

Of the same mother and father

Who levelled their spears for the double-kill

One against the other

To share then the same dying.

Yet since Nike - She giving glory - has come

To Thebes of the many chariots, adding joy to our joy,

Let the battles become forgotten

As there is the circle-of-the-dance all night

In all the Temples of the gods which Bacchus -

Shaker of the ground that is Thebes - shall lead!

*[Enter Creon]*

But now comes the Lord of this land,

Creon - son of Menoeceus - the new Commander

Whose new fate is given by the gods:  
To where is he rowing  
And why this special calling of Elders to assemble  
By sending proclamation to them all?

### **Creon**

Men - our citadel which the gods greatly shook with storm  
Has, by them, been made secure again.  
Out of everyone I chose you, sending my escort  
To bring you alone here because primarily you I know  
Respected always the authority of the throne of Laius -  
And also because when Oedipus raised up our clan,  
As well as after his sons had died, your thinking was unchanged.  
Now since through their two fates those two in one day  
Were each struck down by their own hand and became thus defiled,  
It is I who now possess the power and the throne  
Because nearest in kin to those who were killed.

Although it is difficult to learn the soul, spirit or judgement  
Of any man until his leadership and his laws  
Have been seen because experienced -  
I, for myself, believe now as before  
That whoever, in ruling a whole clan,  
Does not give noble counsel  
Because some fear keeps his tongue still,  
Is the vilest person of all,

Just as I deem those who consider some friend  
Before their own fatherland to be worthless.  
For I - and in this I invoke Zeus, the All-seeing -  
Would not keep myself from speaking should our people  
Move from safety toward some harm.  
Neither would I have as friend a man hostile  
To my soil since I know that it is she  
Who preserves us like a ship uncapsized  
Allowing us thus to have friends.

Thus shall I by such customs nourish this clan -  
And, as kin of these, I have made a proclamation  
To the people concerning the sons of Oedipus.  
Eteocles, who fought for his people and who died  
The most valiant warrior of them all,  
Shall be covered in a cairn and given  
All rites as befits the valiant who have died.  
But as for his blood-kin, called Polynices -  
He who returned from exile to seek  
200 To utterly destroy with fire  
The race of his ancestors, his gods and his clan,  
Who wanted to feast upon kindred blood  
And enslave what remained of his clan -  
As for him, it has been proclaimed to the clan  
That there shall be no cairn, no honours  
As due to the dead, no lamentation:

He shall be left unburied for all to watch  
The corpse mutilated and eaten by carrion-birds and by dogs!

Such is my judgement, for I shall never  
Honour the ignoble nor place them before the just:  
Yet whoever is friendly toward the clan I shall esteem  
While they live, and when they are dead.

**Chorus**

It is your delight, son of Menoeceus, so to deal  
With the friend and foe of our clan  
Since your will is surely law for all:  
Both the dead, and we who live.

**Creon**

Be then watchmen for my commands.

**Chorus**

Ask someone younger to bear that task.

**Creon**

Others are already watching the corpse.

**Chorus**

What other command of yours, then, is for us?

**Creon**

Not to agree with those who would disobey.

**Chorus**

Only a fool would love death.

**Creon**

Such indeed is the reward - but hope  
Of profit often drives men to ruin.

*[Enter Watchman]*

**Watchman**

Master - I shall not speak of how I swiftly  
And panting reached here on nimble feet,  
For many were the thoughts I had to stop me  
And turn me round in circling paths.  
My psyche spoke to me saying many things:  
'Unhappy one, why do you go to where you will be punished?'  
'Why, you wretch, do you stop? For if Creon learns  
Of this from another man you will surely suffer pain.'

In turning these around, I could not hasten  
But slowly lingered, making the short path long.  
Yet at last victory came to my coming here to you  
For although what I announce may be nothing,

I shall speak it, since I am seized by the belief  
That I can suffer only what my fate decrees.

**Creon**

What is it that has made you lose your courage?

**Watchman**

I want, first, to tell of myself -  
Since I did not do the deed nor see who did  
240 It is not just for me to suffer for it.

**Creon**

You aim well after barricading yourself by circling around  
The deed - revealing you have something strange to tell.

**Watchman**

Danger brings much delay.

**Creon**

So deliver what it is - then go.

**Watchman**

Then I shall speak it - just now the corpse  
Was covered by someone, since gone, for dry dust



Moistened the flesh, giving thus the necessary rites.

### **Creon**

Of what are you telling? For what man would risk this?

### **Watchman**

I did not see - and there were no cuts

Of an axe, no soil thrown out. The earth

Was hard and dry, unbroken by the travelling wheels

Of a cart, for this workman left no marks.

When the first watchman of the day showed us,

It was a distressing wonder for us all

For we could not see the body - yet there was no cairn

Only a covering of dust as if done to escape the disgrace.

There were no signs of wild animals or of dogs

Being there - nor of their tearing

And, loudly, bad words went from one of us to another

260 With guard accusing guard and with blows

To end it, for there was no one to restrain us:

Someone had done it, yet each of us was clear

In turn that they had not, with no one convicted.

We were willing to hold hot iron in our hands,

To walk into fire, to before the gods take oath

That we did not do the deed, nor consult before with

Or help those who did perform it.

At last, when our seeking came to nothing  
One of us in speaking made us all lower our heads  
Toward the ground in fear since none of us  
Could speak against it nor say how we would stay  
Healthy if we agreed. He said we should not  
Conceal it but must bring an account to you.  
We, on this, agreed and by the casting of lots  
It was my unhappy fate to be condemned to that joy.  
Thus, as unwilling as you are to see me I approached here  
Since no one is pleased by the messenger heralding ill.

### **Chorus**

Master - from the first I considered  
That this deed might be the work of the gods.

### **Creon**

280 Cease your words or I shall become glutted with wroth  
And you revealed as both stupid and old!  
I cannot endure your words when you speak  
Of our guardian gods caring about this corpse!  
Did they esteem him as beneficent  
And thus bury him? - he who came to set on fire  
Their spacious Temples, their votive offerings, their land,  
And to break their customs! Have you beheld

The gods honouring the bad? There is no such thing!

Yet just now there were among our clan

Men hostile to my edict who in secret whispered

Against me, rearing their heads instead of keeping their necks

Under the yoke as and when I deem it fitting.

For, indeed, I well understand it is they who hired

These others and by such means caused this deed to be done:

For, among men, it is silver as coins

That brings forth base customs - that thing ravages clans,

Drives men from their homes, trains honest mortals well

How to turn from reason and practice dishonest deeds!

It instructs men in cunning arts, making them

To know all kinds of acts of destruction.

Yet all hirelings

Finally pay by having to yield to what is right.

*[Creon turns to speak to the Watchman]*

Since I, at least, still hold Zeus in awe,

Then understand this - and I speak an oath -

If you do not discover he who by his own hands

Did this burial and reveal him before my own eyes,

Then not even Hades by itself will suffice for you

For first you will be strung up alive

Until you reveal your insolence -

This will be a lesson as to where profit may be obtained

For such a plundering will have taught you

Not to love gain from wherever it comes.

And it will be seen that from such dishonourable receiving  
More are injured than are safe.

**Watchman**

Can I speak - or may I turn and go?

**Creon**

Have you not seen how your words pain me?

**Watchman**

Where is your wound - in your ears, or in your soul?

**Creon**

Do you instruct me as to how I am injured?

**Watchman**

The doer assaults your reason - I, your ears.

**Creon**

It is clear that you grew to be a babbler.

**Watchman**

Even if so, I did not do this deed.

**Creon**

You did: and abandoned your soul for silver!

**Watchman**

How fearful - to assume when such assumption is false!

**Creon**

What elegant opinions you have! But if you do not reveal  
To me those who did it, you will be gushing forth  
That cowardly gains injure those who make them!

*[Exit Creon]*

**Watchman**

Before all may he be discovered - but whether caught  
Or not, it is fate which chooses.  
Whatever, I shall not come here again  
For I beyond my hope and reason am kept safe  
And for this have a duty to give to the gods many favours.

*[Exit Watchman]*

**Chorus**

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than we human beings:

For this being crosses the gray sea of Winter  
Against the wind, through the howling sea swell,  
And the oldest of gods, ageless Earth -  
She the inexhaustible -  
He wearies, turning the soil year after year  
By the plough using the offspring of horses.

He snares and captures the careless race of birds,  
The tribes of wild beasts, the natives of the sea,  
In the woven coils of his nets -  
This thinking warrior: he who by his skill rules over  
The wild beasts of the open land and the hills,  
And who places a yoke around the hairy neck  
Of the horse, taming it - and the vigorous mountain bull.

His voice, his swift thought,  
The raising and ordering of towns:  
How to build against the ill-winds of the open air  
And escape the arrows of storm-rain -  
All these things he taught himself,  
He the all-resourceful  
From whom there is nothing he does not meet  
Without resources - except Hades  
From which even he cannot contrive an escape  
Although from unconquered disease  
He plans his refuge.

365 Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts - he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry:  
Yet, by fulfilling his duties to the soil,  
His oaths to the customs given by the gods,  
Noble is his clan although clan-less is he who dares  
To dwell where and with whom he please -  
Never shall any who do this  
Come to my hearth or I share their judgement.

*[Enter Antigone and Watchman]*

Now this sign from the god  
I cannot speak against  
For I see that the girl brought here  
Is Antigone.  
Unfortunate daughter of Oedipus the unfortunate -  
What is this?  
Can it be that you are brought here  
For being faithless to the Chief's law -  
Caught in an act lacking reason?

**Watchman**

Here is the one who did the deed:  
We captured her burying him. But where is Creon?

## **Chorus**

From his dwelling he now fittingly arrives.

*[Enter Creon]*

## **Creon**

What is it that makes my arrival fortunate?

## **Watchman**

Master - we mortals should never swear not to do anything  
For an advance in thought cheats our former judgement:  
I might have vowed for my desire to return to be weak  
Because of your threats - that tempest I went through before.  
Yet since that delight which is beyond hope is,  
In extent, beyond other pleasures,  
I - despite taking oath - have come here,  
Leading this maiden whom I captured giving rites  
Of burial. There was then no need to cast and draw lots  
For this chance was mine and mine alone.

So now, Master, take hold of her yourself  
And examine and question her according to your will.  
Thus it is fitting that I go  
400 Completely free of these troubles.



**Creon**

This maiden you lead - how and where was she caught?

**Watchman**

Burying that man. Now all by you is known.

**Creon**

Do you clearly hear what your words announce?

**Watchman**

I saw her giving forbidden burial rites to that corpse.

Are these words of mine plain and clear?

**Creon**

Was she seen and seized doing the deed?

**Watchman**

Thus it was: when I returned there

After those terrible threats you made against us,

All the dust covering the corpse we swept away

To leave the putrid body bare while we sat,

Wind-sheltered, by the top of the hill

To escape the hurling smell.

We kept awake by shaking and loud threats

Those men who did not attend to their work,  
And long this continued until Helios with his radiant circle  
Had established himself in middle-sky, burning us.  
Then suddenly from the earth as a thunderbolt through air  
A whirlwind came afflicting the heavens:  
Filling the plain, beating all the leaves  
420 From the trees of the fields and vomiting them high in the sky  
While we closed our eyes against this sickness sent by a god.  
And when after much waiting our deliverance came,  
We saw this girl who loudly wailed  
With the sharp shrill voice of a bird when it beholds  
There is nothing lying in the empty nest.

So it was that she on seeing the corpse bare  
Loudly wailed and made bad wishes  
Against those who had done that deed.  
Then suddenly she with her hands brought dry dust  
And raised a well-crafted bronze ewer to honour  
The corpse with the three-fold libation.  
Seeing this, we rushed down to trap her  
But she was not surprised and we accused her  
Of that act and the one before. She did not deny it -  
And this pleased me, yet also gave me pain,  
For while it is pleasing to escape suffering oneself  
It is painful to bring suffering to a member of one's folk.  
Yet all such things are for me less important

440 Than my own escape and survival.

**Creon**

You there - inclining your head to the ground -

Do you affirm or do you deny doing these things?

**Antigone**

I did them - and do not deny it!

**Creon**

*[To Watchman:]*

As for you, you can convey yourself

Where you will, free from the burden of blame.

*[Exit Watchman]*

Now, not at great length but briefly, tell me

If you knew of the proclamation made in this case?

**Antigone**

Certainly I knew - it was clear.

**Creon**

So even then you dared to violate these laws?

## **Antigone**

It was not Zeus who proclaimed them to me,  
Nor did she who dwells with the gods below - the goddess, Judgement -  
Lay down for us mortals such laws as those.  
Neither did I suppose that your edicts  
Had so much strength that you, who die,  
Could out-run the unwritten and unchanging  
Customs of the gods: for the life of these things  
Is not only of yesterday or today, but eternal,  
No one remembering their birth.

I did not seek - because I feared any man's pride -  
To be punished by the gods for breaking their laws:  
For I clearly saw I would die even before your proclamation.  
That my death is now sooner, I say is a gain  
Since how can he who lives among so many cowards as I  
Not find a gain in dying?  
There is thus for me no sorrow in this  
My destined fate. Yet had I left the corpse  
Of my own mother's son unburied  
Then I would have sorrow, as I have no sorrow now!

And if you believe I from stupidity performed the deed  
Then it is the stupid exposing his own stupidity!

## **Chorus**

Clear it is that this child is the savage offspring  
Of a savage father - suffering does not bend her.

## **Creon**

It is known that those too hardened in their thinking  
Assuredly fall, for it is the strongest iron,  
Baked hard by fire, that is often seen to suddenly shatter,  
And a small bridle restrains the angry horse.  
It is not allowed for a servant to possess pride.

480 She is well-practised in insolence, in going beyond  
The prescribed laws - for after the first, her further  
Insolence was to boast of it, and laugh!  
Now she would be a man, and I would not  
Were she to be master in this and uninjured:  
For even were she a child of my sister  
Or closer in blood than all in my home -  
Who are bound whole by Zeus -  
She and her sister would not escape their miserable fate  
For I indeed accuse her as well of sharing  
In the planning of this burial.

Summon her here! For just now I saw her inside,  
Frenzied and not possessing any judgement.  
For often the thoughts of those desiring dark deeds

Become revealed before such deeds are done.  
And, further, I hate those who when caught  
Seek to beautify their baseness and their deeds.

**Antigone**

Do you will more than herding me to my slaughter?

**Creon**

Nothing more - when I have that, it is over.

**Antigone**

Then why delay? Your speech does not please me  
500 Nor can ever please me, just as my own is displeasing to you.  
For what greater renown could I obtain  
Than the renown gained by giving burial to my own brother?  
By all these men would this be said  
Were their tongues not stopped through fear.  
But a King has much wealth  
And can speak and act as he himself desires.

**Creon**

You alone of all the Cadmeans see this.

**Antigone**

They see: but you stop their mouths from opening.

**Creon**

But are you not ashamed because alone in such thinking?

**Antigone**

There is no shame in honouring womb-kin.

**Creon**

Yet was it not your brother who was killed by the hostile side?

**Antigone**

A brother, born of my mother and father.

**Creon**

How then by being dis-honourable to him can you show him respect?

**Antigone**

He who is dead and below would not bear witness to that!

**Creon**

He will when your respect is his dis-honour.

**Antigone**

It was not a slave, but a brother who died.

**Creon**

He died trying to rape this land which the other one protected!

**Antigone**

Yet Hades longs for these rites.

**Creon**

520 But what the decent inherit is not the same as what is given to the bad.

**Antigone**

Who can see if such things are acceptable to those below us?

**Creon**

Even in death an enemy is never a friend.

**Creon**

I came forth not to return hate but to love friends.

**Creon**

Then when you go into earth, love them, if love them you must.



I, while living, will not be commanded by a woman.

*[Enter Ismene]*

### **Chorus**

Certain it is that here before the door is Ismene  
A cloud above her eyes casting down tears in love  
For her sister, drop by drop  
To moisten her beauty of face  
And shadow her blood-red cheeks.

### **Creon**

You! - who stayed lurking like a snake in my home  
Secretly sucking at me for I did not see  
I was feeding two destructions and subverters  
From my throne -  
Tell me, do you say you shared in this burial  
Or will you make oath and say you did not know?

### **Ismene**

I did the deed - if she agrees -  
And share with her the burden and the blame.

### **Antigone**

But it is not fair to allow you this  
Since you did not desire it and I gave you no share.

**Ismene**

540 Now maledictions assail you, I would be ashamed  
Not to sail with you toward misfortune.

**Antigone**

Of that act, Hades and those below are witness:  
As to words, I do not love those who care for them.

**Ismene**

Sister, do not dishonour me  
But let me die with you and so purify his death.

**Antigone**

My death is not for sharing; do not claim to have touched  
What you have not - my dying is sufficiency itself.

**Ismene**

What life have I to love without you?

**Antigone**

Ask Creon since you care for him.

**Ismene**

Why hurt me when it does not profit you?

**Antigone**

If I laugh, it is from pain that I laugh.

**Ismene**

How then can I help you?

**Antigone**

Save yourself - I shall not blame you for escaping.

**Ismene**

This hurts me! And I then to be deprived of your fate?

**Antigone**

You chose life: I, my dying.

**Ismene**

Yet I did not keep silent but spoke.

**Antigone**

To some, your intentions were right; to others, mine.

**Ismene**

Why, then, is the fault both yours and mine?

**Antigone**

Be trusting; you live, but my psyche long ago

560 Perished that I might aid the dead.

**Creon**

In this, one child now reveals herself without reason

While the other has been without from her beginning.

**Ismene**

So it is, sir, that sometimes such reason as grows

Is displaced when misfortunes arise.

**Creon**

Yours was, when you ignobly arose to aid the ignoble.

**Ismene**

How would I, alone, live without her?

**Creon**

Do not speak of her as being here - she is nothing!

**Ismene**

Will you then slay her betrothed to your son?

**Creon**

There are other furrows for him to plant his plough in.

**Ismene**

570 But for them it was so fitting.

**Creon**

I would detest my son having an ignoble wife!

**Ismene**

Dear Haemon - your father dishonours you!

**Creon**

You annoy me - you and this marriage!

**Ismene**

Would you deprive your son of his wife?

**Creon**

It is Hades who will relieve me of that wedding.

**Ismene**

So it seems, then, that she will die.

## **Creon**

So it is - by both you and I. No more delay now!

You slaves - take them within!

For they now must be women and thus be constrained.

Even the bold flee when they behold Hades

Very close to their life.

*[Exit Antigone and Ismene]*

## **Chorus**

Favoured by a divinity are those never tasting badness

Since when a clan is shaken by the gods

There is no misfortune that is missed for generations to come

As when the heavy-breathing sea of Thrace attacks

The deep darkness to roll from the bottom

The black sands

590 And there are sighs and shouts at the ill-winds

As the sea breaks against and over-runs the shore.

I watch those ancient sufferings of the clan of Labdacus

Fall upon the suffering of those dead -

Generation after generation captive

Since a god casts them down,

Giving no release.

The light cast upon the last root of the family of Oedipus

Has become dimmed by the red dust of the gods below,  
By speech lacking understanding  
And by frenzied judgements.

Zeus - what mortal can transgress and hold back your strength  
Which even sleep, subduer of all, cannot seize  
Nor even the inexhaustible months of the gods;  
You, who are master of gleaming radiant Olympus!  
And so now, as thereafter and in the past, this custom prevails:  
In mortal life, there is no prosperity without misfortune.

Far-ranging hope delights many mortals  
While many are tricked because deprived  
Of their judgement by desires -  
For what is to come, is not seen,  
Until the foot is burnt  
In the heat of the fire.

620 And there is wisdom in this renowned saying:  
Sometimes the bad has appearance of nobility  
To those whose reasoning is damaged by the god,  
And only for a short season is there exemption  
From misfortune.

But here is Haemon, youngest and last of your sons:  
Is he in grief at the fate of the nubile maiden,  
Antigone, promised to him in marriage  
And in great anguish because cheated

Out of that wedding?

*[Enter Haemon]*

**Creon**

Soon we will see - and more than some prophet would have done.

My son, have you heard of that decision that brings to an end

Your promised bride, and so come in rage at your father -

Or, whatsoever that I do, are we still friends?

**Haemon**

You are my father and your opinions

Possess worth and correctly guide me.

For me, no wedding is of greater value

Than the noble lead you give.

**Creon**

640 Yes, my son, you must be so directed by your heart

And in all things stand behind your father's opinion.

It is for this that a man prays to have his offspring grow

Hearing and obeying him in his home:

That they treat his enemies as worthless

While esteeming his friends as they do his father.

But of those who sow unprofitable children,

You can only say that they have breed toil for themselves

And provided their enemies with much laughter.



Do not, my son, cast out your reason  
For the pleasures of a woman,  
For embraces become cold when a bad woman  
Is your bed-partner:  
And a bad relative is a large festering wound.  
Now, with loathing, spit on that girl  
And let her marry someone in Hades!  
Since, from all of our folk she alone  
I have caught in visible disobedience,  
I will not show myself false to these folk -  
Thus, I shall put her to death.

So let her chant to Zeus, guardian of kinsfolk!  
Were I to nourish disorder in my own blood-relations  
Then I would most certainly be doing so within our clan.  
Any man who is honest within his own family  
Will, by the folk, be seen to be fair -  
And whomsoever by force transgresses the customs  
And presumes to command his master  
Will never be applauded by me,  
Since those whom the folk appoint, must be obeyed  
In what is small, what is fair, and what is not.  
I have confidence that such a man  
Would nobly rule as he would be willing to be ruled  
And would, in a storm of spears, be steadfast

And stand his ground - a valiant comrade at one's side.

The worst ill is to have no leader:

It is this which destroys clans,

Which causes families to disperse,

Which makes a spear-alliance to turn and break

Just as of those who do stand firm

The greater number are saved due to obeying commands.

Therefore, we must defend the rule-givers

And never let a woman overcome us:

If we must be thrust down, it is better done by a man

680 So that we are not called weaker-than-a-woman.

### **Chorus**

To me, unless the seasons have cheated me,

Your sayings appear to be wise sayings.

### **Haemon**

Father, it is the gods who root reason in mortals

And, of all our possessions, it is the greatest.

Of your sayings, I could not, even had I the experience,

Say wherein they are not correct

Although another might, with fairness, differ.

For me, it is natural to watch, for you,

All that others say or do or blame you for:

Your eyes awe the common man  
So that they say only what you delight in hearing.  
But I have heard how under cover of darkness  
The clan grieve for this girl -  
For, of all women, she is the most undeserving  
To perish, dishonoured, for so honourable a deed:  
With her very own brother slaughtered,  
She did not leave him unburied  
To be eaten by carrion dogs or any bird.  
Does she not merit a golden honour?  
700 Such is the talk spread in secret.

For myself, there is no possession I value higher  
Than your prosperity, father:  
What, for a youngster, can have greater glory  
Than a father's prospering fame -  
Or, for a father, that of his children?  
Do not keep only a single mask for yourself  
In that what you say, and nothing else, is correct.  
For whosoever supposes that he alone is wise  
Or that his words or his nature are above all others  
Will, when split open, be revealed as empty.  
Certainly a man, clever though he be,  
Can without shame learn many things  
And so still stretch himself.  
See how beside the torrents of Winter

The trees whose branches yield are kept safe  
While those that resist are laid waste to their roots  
Just as whomever holds, taut and unyielding,  
The sail of a ship will overturn it,  
Completing the voyage with the deck downturned.

Thus, give way and so permit your anger to change.  
If I, though young, may put forth my understanding  
I would say it would be excellent if men by nature  
Knew about everything - but if not, and seldom are they  
So inclined, it is noble to learn  
From those who speak what is honourable.

### **Chorus**

Master - it is reasonable, if his words are in season,  
That you are instructed, as he has been by you. Both your words are fortunate.

### **Creon**

Is it natural that those of such an age as me  
Be taught how to reason by men of such an age as he?

### **Haemon**

It is only fair. Although I am young,  
Behold my acts not the seasons I have seen!

**Creon**

730 Can respect be given to those who work mischief?

**Haemon**

I would never entreat anyone to respect what is bad.

**Creon**

But is she not attacked by that sickness?

**Haemon**

The whole clan of Thebes deny it.

**Creon**

Is the clan to tell me what I ought to do then?

**Haemon**

Observe - you are speaking as though very young.

**Creon**

Am I then to rule this land as I deem, or as others do?

**Haemon**

It is not a clan if it is the possession of any one man.

**Creon**

It is the custom for a clan to have a master.

**Haemon**

You would make a good ruler - alone in the wilderness!

**Creon**

740 So - he is fighting for that woman!

**Haemon**

My concern is for you - so you are the woman!

**Creon**

Totally shameful - to dispute so with your father!

**Haemon**

Not when I see you missing your duty.

**Creon**

Do I err in respecting my own authority?

**Haemon**

You do not respect it when you tread on the offerings due to the gods.

**Creon**

You stain your character by coming second - to a woman!

**Haemon**

You will never find me overcome by dishonour.

**Creon**

But all your words are for that girl.

**Haemon**

And also for you, me and the gods below us.

**Creon**

750 While she lives you will never marry her.

**Haemon**

Then she will die and in dying destroy another.

**Creon**

Are you so bold that you make threats?

**Haemon**

Is it a threat to speak against hollow thoughts?

**Creon**

Suffering shall instruct you - for your own hollow reasoning!

**Haemon**

Were you not my father, I would say you could not judge things correctly.

**Creon**

You slave of a woman! Do not babble at me!

**Haemon**

You like speaking - but not hearing a reply!

**Creon**

Is that so? By Olympus know

That you will soon suffer for reviling me with insults!

760 Bring that hated thing here so that she will die

Now beside her bridegroom and before his eyes!

**Haemon**

No - do not believe that she will perish beside me

Or that you with your eyes will ever see my face again.

So, rage on then at such kinsfolk as can endure it!



*[Exit Haemon]*

**Chorus**

Master - that man, hurled by anger, has swiftly gone.

Someone of such an age as he, when injured, has a strong resolve.

**Creon**

Let him experience and understand more than other men.

But, whatever, the two girls shall not escape their fate.

**Chorus**

So you still intend to slay them both?

**Creon**

Your words are well taken. Not she whose hands are clean.

**Chorus**

What fate had you planned for the other's death?

**Creon**

She will be led to where the paths are desolate of mortals

And be concealed alive in a rock-hewn tomb

With as much food before her as is required for expiation

So that the whole clan escapes pollution.

There she may if she asks have success from dying  
By giving reverence to Hades, the only god she reveres -  
Or she will learn at last though late by this  
780 That it is useless toil to so revere Hades.

*[Exit Creon]*

### **Chorus**

Eros - unconquered in battle:  
Eros - despoiler of wealth  
Who at night keeps vigil by the soft lips  
Of a young girl  
And who widely roams over sea and land  
To even the wildest dwellings!

No immortal can escape you  
Nor any mortals while they live:  
You possess them all with your frenzy.  
Those who are fair become unfair  
And are disgraced  
As you wrest aside their reason -  
You who now trouble these kinsmen with strife!  
Passion is victorious - for a comely, clear-eyed, bride -  
And this power is seated there beside the ancient lawgivers,  
800 There where the goddess Aphrodite mocks us,  
With no resistance.

But now, as I look there, I am carried beyond that decree  
And cannot from their source block these burgeoning tears  
As I see Antigone passing to that inner chamber  
Wherein we will all be quiet.

*[Enter Antigone]*

### **Antigone**

You see me, fathers of our clan,  
Go forth on my last journey  
By the light of this sun that hereafter  
I shall not see again.  
Hades - he who makes all of us quiet -  
Leads me while I live  
To the banks of Acheron  
And there shall be no bridal songs for me  
To share in,  
No nuptial hymns in praise -  
Since I shall be bride to Acheron.

### **Chorus**

With renown, and praised, you depart  
For the tomb of the dead:  
No wasting sickness struck you,

No sword of punishment was your fate;  
Instead - you who were independent of the decrees of others  
Shall, alone among mortals, descend while you live  
Down into Hades.

### **Antigone**

I have heard of the sorrowful death  
Of that Phrygian guest who was Tantalus' daughter,  
Who on the highest part of Sipylus was overpowered  
By sprouting rock clinging to her like ivy.  
There, heavy rain and snow - such are men's stories -  
Never departs as she lamenting moistens with tears  
Her brows and ridges.  
In the same way some god shall lay me down to sleep.

### **Chorus**

Yet she was a goddess, born of gods  
While you and I are mortals, born of mortals.  
So it is a great thing to perish so  
Since it will be said you are equal to the gods  
Having shared in such a fate:  
While living, and afterwards in your dying.

### **Antigone**

I am laughed at! By the gods of our fathers

840 Could this not wait - must I be insulted here in this light?

My clan! You - wealthy kinsmen;

You, springs of Dirce, and you, sacred-groved Thebes of the beautiful chariots!

I have you, at least, to bear witness

How and by what decree I go with no lamentations from my kin

To be placed in that fresh cairn

Which shall be my grave:

I, the unfortunate one,

Who shall be among neither mortals nor corpses

But instead a foreigner to the living and the dead.

### **Chorus**

You approached the boundary of boldness

And, at the high altar of the goddess, Judgement,

You, my child, heavily stumbled.

Perhaps your ordeal is retribution because of your father.

### **Antigone**

You touch that concern which pains me -

The often-ploughed lamentations made for my father

860 And the whole destiny of the famed clan of Labdacus.

That bane of a mother's bed

Where she lay in ill-fated intercourse

With her own child, my father!

From such was I, who endures, brought forth  
And now I, cursed and unwed,  
Go forth to stay with them  
Since you my brother who found your ill-fortune  
By your marriage, in your death  
Killed my being.

### **Chorus**

To honour is honourable  
But he who has authority cannot allow  
Anyone to overstep his authority:  
Your obstinate character ruined you.

### **Antigone**

Without friends, without lamentations,  
With no bridal songs am I, suffering, taken  
To what lies prepared for me.  
No more, it is decreed, shall I the unfortunate see  
The sacred eye that is the sun:  
And there are no tears for my destiny,  
No kin who lament.

*[Enter Creon]*

### **Creon**

If songs and wailings were before death

They would never stop, if it was useful to say them!  
Swiftly, lead her away! And, as I have said, enclose her  
Within her embracing cairn then leave her alone  
And desolate if necessary to die  
Or to live buried and concealed.  
We are then pure concerning this maiden.  
Whatever! - she shall be deprived of residing here on earth.

### **Antigone**

My bridal-chamber is a carved-out tomb,  
A chamber always to guard me, wherein I shall pass  
To my own, of whom the greater number have perished already -  
Received by Persephone to be among the dead.  
Last and most ill-fated of all I shall descend down  
Before my portion of living has expired.

But I have within the strong hope that this my setting out  
Will be welcome to you my father; pleasing to you  
My mother; and pleasing also to you my brother -  
900 For when death came, with my own hands  
I moistened and dressed you and poured libations  
Over your graves. Now, Polynices, it for covering your body  
That I have won such as this.

Yet, to the wise, I rightly honoured you  
Although I might not - had it been my own child

Or my husband who had died and was putrid -  
Have taken up that task against the folk.  
To what custom do I do homage in speaking thus?  
My husband dead, I might have had another  
And a child by this other man in place of the first-born  
But with my mother and father hidden in Hades  
No brother could ever come forth again.  
Such was the custom by which I honoured you,  
My own brother - but Creon believed it wrong  
And dangerously reckless:  
So now by his hands he forcibly leads me away.  
There are no nuptials in bed, no bridal songs,  
No wedding, no share in nurturing children  
920 As I pass while living to my grave and my death.

What divine decree have I transgressed?  
Shall I, the unfortunate, look again to the gods?  
What ally can be invoked  
Now I for my respect am said to be dis-respectful?  
Yet if these things are fair to the gods  
Then I will experience my mistake  
While if it is these others who are mistaken  
Then may they experience in retribution  
No greater ills than those they give to me.



### **Chorus**

The same spirit, gusting stormfully, still sways  
In the same way this girl.

### **Creon**

And because of that, trouble will befall  
Her guards over their slowness!

### **Antigone**

This therefore brings closer  
That death!

### **Creon**

I do not encourage you to believe  
That that will not be fulfilled.

### **Antigone**

Community of my fathers on this Theban soil!  
You elder gods!  
No longer do they delay.

940 Behold me, you Theban lords,  
The solitary descendant of your nobility  
And how I can be treated and by what kind of man  
For so respecting honour!

*[Exit Antigone]*

## **Chorus**

So endured Danaë - for whom the light of heaven  
Was bartered for a chamber wrought in bronze  
And where, in that enclosing tomb,  
She was shut in.  
She also, my child, was of noble birth:  
She to whom Zeus dispensed his wet golden seed.  
But numinous is the power of destiny -  
It cannot be escaped from by wealth, by combat,  
By ramparts, by taking to a ship upon a black-storming sea.

Thus was the son of Dryas - he of the swift anger  
And Chief of the Edonians - tamed  
By Dionysus for his wrothful taunts  
And confined, bound by rock,  
Where in his strange frenzy  
His bursting fierceness trickled from him.  
He came to know the god who had touched him,  
With frenzy, for his taunting tongue -  
For he had sought to stop the god-possessed women  
And their Bacchic fire, provoking thus  
The flute-loving Muses.

By Cyanaei of the two-fold sea  
Are the Bosphorus shores  
And Thracian Salmydessus  
Where Ares, dwelling close by the citadel,  
Beheld the two sons of Phineas  
Blinded by ruinous wounds  
Dealt by that savage second wife -  
A blinding of orbs the seeing of which brought vengeance -  
By sticking at them with the points  
Of her weaver's spindle, blood staining her hands.

Anguished by this anguish they cried aloud  
980 Their misfortune - those born from a mother's unhappy marriage:  
She of the fabled seed of Erechtheus,  
Reared in faraway caves  
Amid her father's storms -  
She of Boreas, swift as horse over steep hill,  
Who, though child of a god,  
Was, my child, by those long-living Fates  
Attacked.

*[Enter Tiresias, guided by a boy]*

**Tiresias**

Theban lords, I come here sharing another's steps,  
This one seeing for us both - for the blind

Should be guided along their path.

**Creon**

Well, venerable Tiresias, what that is new brings you here?

**Tiresias**

I shall instruct you. Do oracles persuade you?

**Creon**

Never in the past have I dismissed your judgement.

**Tiresias**

And thus have you straightly steered this clan.

**Creon**

I can testify to how I have profited from you.

**Tiresias**

Know then that fate is ready to cut you down.

**Creon**

What? I shiver at your words!

**Tiresias**

Learn by hearing of these signs of my art.

Just now as at the place of augury I sat,  
1000 Where all kinds of birds gather,  
I heard voices of birds I did not know -  
A bad feverish foreign screeching -  
And sensed they were tearing at each other  
With their deadly claws:  
And the rushing of their wings left no doubt.

In awe, I went straight to rouse a blazing  
Altar-fire to burn sacrifice. But Hephaestus  
Did not seize the offering by flames.  
Instead, puss oozed from the thighs down to the embers  
To spit and smoke while the gall-bladder swelled  
To burst open and the fat covering the thighs dripped out.

Such I learnt from this boy here  
Of the sign-less divination from the failed sacrifice -  
He gives me a lead, as I give a lead to others.  
And it is your judgement that brought sickness to our clan.  
The altar, the hearths - all of them -  
Have been soiled by the suppurating food torn  
By birds and by dogs from the ill-fated son of Oedipus.  
1020 Wherefore the gods do not accept our sacrificial supplications  
Nor our burnt-offerings:  
And no bird in its screeching cry gives favourable signs  
Since they have devoured the blood-soaked fat of a slain warrior.

Understand these things, my son. All mortals have in common  
That sometimes they aim wrong, and miss - but after an error  
A man is no longer luckless or thoughtless  
If he wills to cure the ill he has fallen into  
By not remaining idle:  
Obstinacy and awkwardness bring reproaches.  
Give way to the dead: do not goad those who have fallen.  
Is it courageous to kill the dead again?  
Carefully have I judged this; carefully have I spoken - for it is pleasing  
To learn from such careful words from such words  
Are profitable to you.

### **Creon**

Old man - all of you like archers shoot arrows at me as target,  
And not even by your divinations am I left  
Unassailed by you and your breed  
To whom I am the customer who buys your goods!  
Gain profits and customers, if you so design,  
By the electrum of Sardis and Indian gold  
But you shall not conceal that person in a grave.  
1040 Not even if the eagles of Zeus tear him  
For food and carry it away to Zeus' throne -  
Not even then in dread of such defilement  
Will I submit to him being buried!  
For I know well that no mortal

Has the strength to defile the gods.

Even the cleverest of mortals, old Tiresias,

Are cast down in dishonour

When they for profit grace dishonourable words with elegance.

**Tiresias**

But can any man see, or any explain -

**Creon**

What? Is this to be some common saying?

**Tiresias**

- why wise counsel is superior to all other possessions?

**Creon**

Why? I suggest lack of judgement is the greater mischief.

**Tiresias**

Your nature is full of that disease.

**Creon**

I have no desire - in answer - to contradict a prophet!

**Tiresias**

Yet you spoke of me saying false prophecies!

**Creon**

Yes - because the breed of prophets loves silver!

**Tiresias**

And that of Kings loves shameful gain!

**Creon**

Can you see that when you speak you are speaking to your master?

**Tiresias**

I see! This citadel of yours you saved because of me.

**Creon**

You are skilled in divination but love to do harm!

**Tiresias**

1060 You stir me to express what is inviolate and hidden in my heart!

**Creon**

Bring it forth! Do not speak it only for profit.

**Tiresias**

Were there any, I would not expect you to have any share of it.



## **Creon**

You will see that you cannot buy my heart!

## **Tiresias**

Know then that there will not be, for you, many more  
Loops which the swift sun will complete  
Before you see one born from your own loins a corpse  
In exchange for corpses because you have cast down  
One of those from above  
By dishonourably settling one, alive, in a tomb.  
And also because you held here from the gods below  
A corpse, bereft, profaned, because without funeral rites.  
Not you, not any of the gods above  
Can overpower him now -  
For this is outrage by you to them and shall destroy you  
Since the Furies, of Hades and the gods, will ambush you  
To catch you by those same ills.

Observe if I speak laden with silver  
For there will not be a long delay hereafter  
Before such things are visible and the men and women of your abode  
1080 Will shriek, when hatred casts into disorder all those clans  
Whose own were mangled and buried by dogs or wild beasts  
Or birds of prey carrying away a profane stench  
To those sacred clan sanctuaries.

Since you grieved me, as an archer these  
Are the sure arrows I in anger direct at your heart  
And from whose burns you cannot escape.

So, boy, take me away to my dwelling  
And let him loose his anger on those who are younger  
And nurture his thought by keeping his tongue quiet  
So he obtains better judgement  
Than the judgement he now possesses.

*[Exit Tiresias]*

### **Chorus**

My Lord, that person has left hurling fearful prophecies!  
I am certain that ever since hair - once black  
Now white - crowned me, he has never  
Given false utterances for the clan.

### **Creon**

This also I know and my heart is troubled.  
on one side, I fear to yield; on the other,  
I fear opposition and thus misfortune striking.

**Chorus**

Son of Menoeceus, you should accept good counsel.

**Creon**

What, then, do I need to do? Speak, and I shall consider it.

**Chorus**

1100 Go, and loosen the maiden from her cavern  
And build a tomb to lay within it he who lies exposed.

**Creon**

And that is your advice? You believe I should give way?

**Chorus**

Yes, my Lord, and swiftly. For those swift-footed wretches  
Of the gods cut down the misguided.

**Creon**

It is hard to give up what it is the desire of my heart to do -  
But yet I cannot fight against those forces.

**Chorus**

Go and do these things - do not turn them over to another.

## **Creon**

As I am so shall I go - now! Have follow those here,  
And those others - grasping axes in their hands -  
To rush to that place overlooking here!  
Since I have turned my opinion around  
I, who bound her, should also release her.  
I am anxious because it seems that it is best  
Throughout one's life to keep to what is ancient custom.

*[Exit Creon]*

## **Chorus**

You of the many names! Glory of the Cadmean bride  
And kin to Zeus of the roaring thunder!  
You, who enclose illustrious Italia  
And who rule over the public Eleusinian plain  
Of Deo!  
1120 Bacchus! - Whose frenzied Bacchants dwell  
In your clan-mother Thebes,  
She seeded by the savage dragon  
Near the smooth water of Ismenus!  
  
Above that two-crested rock you are glimpsed  
Through the smoke of flaming-torches -  
There where your frenzied Corycian Nymphs go,  
By Castile's Spring!

You who came from the ivy-covered hills of Nysa  
And that green shore of the many grapes  
To visit the community of Thebes  
Amid that immortal cry: E-U-A-I!

Of all the clans, ours you honour above all others -  
Your mother, stricken by lightning.  
So now, since a strong sickness overcomes  
All of our clan, pass here with your healing feet,  
Over the cliffs of Parnassus or over the Strait of Sighs!

You who dance with the fire-breathing stars,  
Who overshadows the voices of the night,  
The son born of Zeus -  
My Lord, appear! -  
With your Thyiad followers  
Who in frenzy dance through the night  
For you, their Master, Iacchus!

*[Enter Messenger]*

**Messenger**

You who reside by this dwelling of Cadmus and of Amphion,  
There is no way of mortal living  
Which I would either praise or blame,  
For frequently fate raises the unfortunate  
And brings down those of good fortune

1160 And no one can divine the actual being of mortal things.

Creon was once I believe to be envied

For he saved this land of Cadmus from those hostile to it

And guided it well: he who flourished in his nobly born children.

But now, all this is gone - for if a man betrays

What is delightful to him, I do not hold him as living

Since he is but an animated corpse.

Have an abundance of property if such is your aim:

Live in the manner of a great King;

But if they provide no pleasure, I would not obtain them

From any man for such things are as a covering of smoke

Compared to what delights.

### **Chorus**

What grief do you carry for the Chieftains here?

### **Messenger**

Death. And the dead accuse the living.

### **Chorus**

What? Who the killer? Who the slain? Speak!

### **Messenger**

Haemon has died. Bloodied by a kindred hand.

**Chorus**

Was it by his father's hand - or his own?

**Messenger**

By his own in wroth at his father for his killing.

**Chorus**

You - our prophet! How perfect was your skill!

**Messenger**

So the thing is - as to the rest, you must decide.

**Chorus**

1180 I see, nearly here, a sorrowing Eurydice,  
Creon's wife - perhaps fate brings her from her dwelling.  
Or has she heard about her child?

*[Enter Eurydice]*

**Eurydice**

You clansmen - I felt your words  
As I departed to greet and offer supplication to the goddess Pallas.

As I drew back the bolts to open the gate  
A voice - woeful for my family - struck my ears  
And in fear I crouched backwards into the arms  
Of my servant, unable to move.

So, you, tell again what message you brought  
And I shall hear it since I am not without experience of misfortune.

### **Messenger**

My Lady - I who was present shall tell  
What passed and disclose all what was said.  
Why should I soften you with lies  
Which will soon be revealed? Disclosure is straightforward.

As a guide I attended your husband  
To where the plain ends at that place where, unlamented,  
Was the dog-torn body of Polynices.  
1200 To the goddess of the crossing-trackways and to Pluton  
We prayed for them to with-hold their frenzy and be friendly  
And with pure libations washed what had been left,  
Gathering them together to burn them with newly-plucked boughs  
And raise over them a high tumulus of his native soil.

Next, we went toward to enter the stone-lined cavern  
Of the maiden - that bridal-chamber for Hades -  
When, still far off, one of us heard a voice loudly wailing  
Beside that nuptial chamber bereft of funeral rites,



And came to inform Creon our Master  
Who as he went near was ambushed by a wretched strange cry  
And who, mournfully lamenting, said:  
Wretch that I am, is that what I divine it to be?  
Shall I go along the most unpleasant track I have ever taken?  
Is that the pleasing voice of my son? Servants! - swiftly go  
Nearer there in the gap where the earth has been dug  
And the stones torn away, and enter that mouth to see  
If it is Haemon's voice that I heard or if the gods have deceived me.

This order by our despairing Master we obeyed  
1220 And at the end of the tumulus we beheld her  
Hanging by the neck, a noose of threaded fine linen  
Fastening her and he embracing her around her middle,  
Wailing for his bride - destroyed and now below -  
At his father's deeds and his own ill-fated marriage.  
Seeing him, his father gave a fearful cry  
And, loudly lamenting, went within to call to him -  
Unfortunate one! Why have you done this deed?  
What resolve possessed you? What misfortune overpowered you?  
My son - I in supplication beseech you to come out!

The boy gave no answer but looked at him  
With wild eyes then spat on his face  
And drew his double-edged sword.  
But his father hastened to retreat

And then the ill-fated one enraged at himself forthwith  
Stretched himself to lean on that point  
Until half the length was in his side.  
Then, still breathing, he with but feeble arms  
Embraced the maiden to gasp and spurt forth a swift stream  
Of his dripping blood upon her white cheek.  
1240 Corpse lay upon corpse as he the unfortunate completed his rites  
Of marriage in the dwelling of Hades.  
Thus, this shows to mortals that of the ills conferred upon men  
The greatest is privation of wisdom.

*[Exit Eurydice]*

### **Chorus**

To what is this like? For now the lady goes away  
Without speaking of honour or dishonour.

### **Messenger**

I also am amazed. Yet my own hope is nourished  
Since having heard about her unfortunate child it would not be dignified  
For her to lament before her people.  
Rather, she will in the concealment of her dwelling appoint her servants

To lament with her in grief.

She is not so lacking in experience that she would err.

### **Chorus**

About this - I do not know, since an excessive silence

Is no less of a portent than an abundance of wailing.

### **Messenger**

We will be certain whether she keeps a secret

Shrouded in her passionate heart since I shall enter the dwelling.

Your words may indeed be fortunate - for this excessive silence

Could well portend something.

*[Exit Messenger]*

### **Chorus**

Here comes our Lord, himself -

In his hands a memorial as a token,

If it is fitting for me to say it, of his own error

1260 And not that of some stranger.

### **Creon**

I lament -

For those bad errors of judgement

Which condemned others to death!

You see here the killer

And he of the same family whom he killed.  
I cry because of my own ill-fated plans  
And for my young son who died so young.  
You - who perished, who left us,  
Not because your plans were wrong, but because mine were.

### **Chorus**

Thus, too late, you see the meaning of customs.

### **Creon**

A dreadful learning! It was a god who, attacking me  
On my head with a great weight, made me to wander wildly  
And who overturned and stamped on my joy!  
I lament - for wearisome are the toils given to mortals.

*[Enter Messenger]*

### **Messenger**

Master - you came bearing that grief in your hands,  
Seeing that one, but you will soon see  
1280 These others stored within your dwelling.

### **Creon**

What further ills could follow ills such as these?

**Messenger**

That your wife has died - mother in every way to that corpse,  
And unfortunate - from fresh wounds.

**Creon**

Ah!

How can I purify that haven of Hades?

I am destroyed!

You who convey the sorrow of these bad tidings -

What message can you speak?

You, there - do you pursue me to kill me again?

What misfortune is mine! Speak your message of a wife's fate:

Of this new sacrifice heaped upon those killed!

**Messenger**

See - it is no longer concealed.

*[The doors to Creon's dwelling open, to reveal  
the body of Eurydice ]*

**Creon**

I behold this second grief!

What fate still awaits me now -

Me, who has held in my hands our child

And who in misery looks upon her, a corpse.

1300 I lament for you - the ill-fated mother, and you, her child.

**Messenger**

By the altar with a keen-edged knife

She released her eyes to darkness, lamenting

For the death of Megareus - he renowned for his fate -

Who went before him, there: her last deed

To invoke ills upon you, the killer of her children.

**Creon**

Fear rises within me!

Will no one strike me

In the chest with a cutting sword?

Me - in misery

Whose misery is mixed with anguish.

**Messenger**

She denounced you as being guilty

Both of the death of he who died before, and of this other one.

**Creon**

She who is gone - how was her blood shed?

**Messenger**

She was stricken by her own hand  
As there was loud lament made at the fate of her son.

**Creon**

No other mortals but me can be denounced  
For this. It was I, and no other, who killed.  
I, who here disclose this. You servants -  
Lead me swiftly away!  
For I am no more than nothing.

**Chorus**

There is something to be gained from this - if troubles are a gain -  
Since it is excellent to shorten our ills.

**Creon**

Let it appear - that fate  
Which brings me to my end:  
This is the best and highest of all  
Since then I shall never behold another day!

**Chorus**

Such things are yet to arrive. Before then, it is necessary to be practical.  
What is to arrive shall be attended to by they who order it.

**Creon**

But all that I desire was contained within that vow.

**Chorus**

Then do not make another vow.

Mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate.

**Creon**

Lead this foolish man away!

1340 My child - and you, also. Wretch that I am,

It was not my purpose to slay you.

Now there is nothing for me to look upon,

Nothing to hold onto:

In my hands, everything went wrong

As a heavy fate I could not carry

Leapt upon me.

*[Exit Creon]*

**Chorus**

Judgement is the greater part of good fortune

Just as it is necessary not to be disrespectful to the gods -

For the great words of the excessive boaster

Are repayed by great blows

And this, as one grows old, teaches judgement.

---



First Published 1990

**cc David Wulstan Myatt 1990, 2018**

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

---

**HOMER**

**The Odyssey  
Books One, Two, Three**

**Translated by D.W. Myatt**

First Published 1991

Note: Since this html document was produced by digitally scanning the printed text, there may be scanning errors missed in proof reading. The translation is issued under the Creative Commons (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0) License and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license. A printed version is also available - ISBN-13: 978-1495402227

---

**Book I**

The Muse shall tell of the many adventures of that man of the many stratagems  
Who, after the pillage of that hallowed citadel at Troy,  
Saw the towns of many a people and experienced their ways:  
He whose vigour, at sea, was weakened by many afflictions  
As he strove to win life for himself and return his comrades to their homes.  
But not even he, for all this yearning, could save those comrades  
For they were destroyed by their own immature foolishness  
Having devoured the cattle of Helios, that son of Hyperion,  
Who plucked from them the day of their returning.

So you, my goddess - daughter of Zeus - begin the story somewhere, for us.

It was when those many others, having avoided a grievous fate  
In battle and at sea, were with their families

That he alone - desiring his own return and his wife -  
Was detained by a beautiful goddess, the honoured Nymph Calypso,  
In a hollowed-out cave, for she longed for him to be her lover.  
But when through the turning of the seasons that year arrived  
During which the gods determined he would return to his family at Ithica,  
Not even then could he avoid having to struggle  
As he could not be with his kinsmen. And all of the gods  
Had an affection for him - except Poseidon  
Who was unrelenting in his rage at Odysseus  
Until that noble hero reached his own land.

It was when that god had gone to the distant Ethiopians -  
To be with the remotest of peoples, those Ethiopians who were divided in two  
With some where Hyperion sets, and some where he rises -  
And was present at their sacrifices of sheep and of bulls  
Where he sat, amusing himself at their feasting.  
For, meanwhile, the other gods had assembled at the abode of Zeus on Olympus  
Where that father of gods and mortals spoke,  
Desiring as He did to recall that which distinguished Aegisthus:  
30 He whom the renowned Orestes, son of Agamemnon, had slain.  
And so He recalled that person to those Immortals by saying this:  
"How mortals do blame the gods for things!  
Yet it is their own foolishness which weakens them over and above what is given them.  
Thus it was with Aegisthus who over and above what was given to him  
Seduced the wife of that descendant of Atreus whom he then killed on his homecoming  
Even though he knew he would be destroyed because of such things.  
For we had told him by sending Hermes - that keen eyed destroyer of Argus -  
To say he should neither kill that person nor seduce his woman  
Or else Orestes would exact retribution for that descendant of Atreus  
When that youth began to long for his land.

Thus with his skillful reasoning did Hermes speak -

But Orestes refused to understand. And now he has paid for all those things together."

Then Athena - the goddess with those beautiful blue eyes - answered Him:

"You who are the son of Cronos and our father - you who are the supreme Chief -

It is certainly fitting that he was destroyed

As may anyone else who does such things perish in such a way as that.

But now my heart is pierced by Odysseus - he skilled in combat -

Who, unfortunately, has for a long while endured sufferings while far from his kinfolk

50 On an island protected on all sides and in the middle of the sea.

It is an island abounding in trees which a goddess has made her abode:

She is the daughter of that dangerous god, Atlas -

He who has seen how deep is the whole of that sea

And who by himself holds those great pillars that keep earth and sky apart.

It is his daughter who detains that sad and unlucky person,

For continually she with her soft and flattering words seeks to enchant him

So that he might forget Ithica. But Odysseus,

Longing to see again even smoke rising from his homeland, desires to die.

And yet you - the Olympian one - have not directed your vigour at this.

For did not Odysseus reward you when beside those Argive ships

He performed those sacrifices in the vastness of Troy?

When then, Zeus, are you angry with him?"

In answer, Zeus - he who controls the clouds - said:

"My child - what a word you have let escape through the barrier of your teeth!

How could I forget Odysseus - he of supreme heroism -

He who is above other mortals in his resolution and above them

In the sacrifices he has given to the immortal race of gods who possess the vastness of the sky?

It is Poseidon - he who possesses the earth - who has remained hard in his fury

Because of that blinding of the eye of that Cyclops, noble Polyphemos:  
He who was the best of all those of the race of Cyclops.  
He was the one brought forth by the Nymph, Thoosa -  
The daughter of Phorcys, lord of a barren salt-sea -  
After she and Poseidon had copulated in a hollowed-out cave.  
Yet Poseidon - he who makes the earth to tremble - does not kill Odysseus:  
But has caused him to wander far from the land of his fathers.  
But now let all of us who are here consider this matter  
So that he can set forth and return. Thus will Poseidon let go of his fury  
For even he cannot alone fight all the other immortals,  
Being against what those gods resolve to do."

Then Athena - the goddess with those beautiful blue eyes - answered Him:  
"You who are the son of Chronos and our father - you who are our supreme Chief -  
If it is indeed now pleasing to the changeless gods  
That Odysseus - he skilled in combat - returns to his family,  
Then now let us give encouragement to Hermes, that messenger who destroyed Argus,  
To go to the island of Ogygia so that he may swiftly  
Announce to the Nymph with the finely-plaited hair this infallible plan  
For the return of Odysseus - he of steadfast resolve - so that this homecoming will be.  
As for me, I shall enter Ithica to make his son understand  
So that he calls those fierce, long-haired Achaeans to an assembly  
And exposes those suitors who for a long while  
Have sacrificed his father's huddling sheep and his shambling, dark-eyed oxen.  
And I shall send him to Sparta, and to Pylos of the sandy-beaches,  
To gather information about the return of his father - should he hear anything -  
So that he shall acquire an honourable reputation among mortals."

When she had spoken thus, she fastened upon her feet those fine sandals  
Of divine gold which convey her over the sea  
And the boundless land alongside the blowing of the wind.

Then she took up that robust spear, pointed with sharpened bronze -

100 Heavy, large, thick - with which she subdues those heroic warriors among the race of mortals

Which that daughter of a most valiant father is angry with.

So she rushed down from the heights of Olympus

To arrive at the outer porch of the dwelling of Odysseus

Near the entrance to his columned Hall. Holding in her hand her bronze spear,

She was seen there as a traveller, the Taphian pirate chief, Mentos.

There she found those arrogant suitors who were then at a board-game

In front of those doors, satisfying their desires

As they sat on the hides of oxen which they had slaughtered themselves.

With them were their own Officers and vigilant guards

Some of whom were mixing water and wine in jars

As some were washing the tables with extensively perforated sponges

Before setting them and sharing out the meat.

The first to see her was Telemachus - he of supreme nobility -

As he sat near those suitors absorbed by his anger,

Informed as he was by a vision of his honourable father: that he would arrive

To make those suitors flee from this dwelling

And be rightly honoured and master again of his own possessions.

Telemachus beheld Athena as he sat near those suitors with this wish,

And went directly to the porch, annoyed in his heart

That a traveller had had to wait so long outside his home.

Then, standing near her, he clasped her right hand and her bronze spear

And, addressing her, let fly these words:

"I am pleased to welcome you, a traveller. And when you have eaten

A meal, you must tell what it is that you are seeking."

Such were his words, and Pallas Athena went with him

Into that high-ceilinged dwelling

Where he placed the spear that he carried  
Inside that well-polished spear-cabinet near to a large column  
In which there were many spears belonging to Odysseus - he of steadfast resolve.  
Then, guiding her to the chair for guests, he spread over it  
A cloth of finely wrought linen, gave her a footstool  
And seated himself on a decorated bench so that they were away from those suitors,  
Lest this traveller pushed away the food,  
Being displeased by having to be among the tumult of those overbearing ones -  
And because he could then ask her about his absent father.  
A female attendant from the fine golden urn that she carried  
Poured a libation of water into a silver bowl  
So that their hands were washed, and then placed beside them a polished table.  
Then the venerable housekeeper served them the bread she had brought  
And had placed before them much food, favouring them with what there was:  
Her cook setting down for them cuts from many kinds of meat.  
Beside them were placed goblets of gold  
Which an Officer ensured were kept full of wine.  
Soon, those arrogant suitors - one following another -  
Came to seat themselves on chairs and on benches  
With their own Officers pouring water over their hands  
And their female servants heaping up bread into baskets  
While boys filled jars ready for their drinking.  
Then, those ones thrust their hands at what had been set before them.

150 After the desire for food and drink had left those suitors,  
They turned their attention to other concerns:  
To songs and to dancing, for such things accompany a feast.  
Thus did an Officer place into the hands of Phemius an instrument of unsurpassed beauty  
And he was compelled by those suitors to sing.  
So he began with that lyre a beautiful chant

As Telemachus spoke with Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes -  
Keeping his head close to hers so that no one else would hear:  
"Having welcomed you as a guest, will what I am about to relate displease you?  
Those ones, there, concern themselves with this music and chant;  
They are careless because they can devour, unpunished, the livelihood of another -  
Someone somewhere stormy whose whitened bones rot away  
As they lie on land or are rolled around by the waves of the sea.  
But were they to sight that man returning to Ithica,  
All of them would wish for feet that were fast  
Rather than for the wealth of gold and of clothes.  
But instead, it seems that some unlucky fate has destroyed him  
And we here have nothing to warm us - not even if some mortal here on this earth  
Were to announce his arrival, for he has lost the day of his returning.  
  
But now, without fear of anyone, inform me about the following:  
Who are you? What is your ancestry and clan?  
What kind of ship conveyed you? How did its mariners  
Come to bring you to Ithica and who were they then claiming to be?  
For your own feet could not have brought you to this place.  
Declare these facts to me so that I know for certain  
Whether this is your first journey here or whether you have been a guest of my father -  
For many men used to stay with our family  
As he himself used to go to and fro among the clans."

In answer, the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said:  
"I shall declare everything for I fear no one.  
I am Mentos - and proud to be the son of battle-hardened Anchialus.  
Also, I am Chief of those most excellent oarsmen, the Taphians  
And have only now arrived here with my companions  
While sailing upon the dark deep sea to foreign-speaking tribes:



To Temea for bronze, and conveying gleaming iron.

My ship waits near to land - far from this citadel -

In that harbour, at Reithron, which is below the forest of Neion.

I am proud to accept your hospitality because our own fathers did so with each other -

And if you want to, go and ask that venerable heroic warrior, Laertes,

Who they say no longer comes to this citadel

But who instead, suffering from an injury, is by himself on his land

With just an old woman to wait upon him to give him food and drink

When weariness seizes his limbs after he has limped up and down

The terraces of his vineyard.

I travelled here, now, because I was told that your father was in his native land:

But it seems that the gods have obstructed his path.

For noble Odysseus is not lying dead somewhere on this earth

But is alive - detained on an island which is protected on all sides

And which is somewhere in the vastness of the sea

Where he is held by a furious, savage, race who detain him against his will.

200 For this, and how it will turn out, is my prophecy -

One which those immortal ones gave me the courage to cast out

Even though I myself am no prophet, having no clear understanding of augury.

And he will not be away from his beloved fatherland

For much longer, even if he is held in chains of iron

Since he will be planning how to return, being how he is very inventive.

But now tell me this, and explain it without fear of anyone:

Are you - who are so big - really the son of Odysseus?

Your features and your noble eyes are very much like his -

For we often met with one another before he sailed forth to Troy

Where went the most courageous of the Argives in their spacious ships.

But, since then, I have not seen Odysseus - nor he, me."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:

"To you, my guest, I shall declare it with no fear of anyone.

My mother has announced that I am his - although this is something I myself

Do not know since no person can ever be completely sure whose offspring he is.

But I wish I was the lucky son of someone

Who had attained his old age with all his possessions

Instead of which - since you have asked me - I am a descendant

Of the most unlucky of mortals: he whom it is said I am descended from."

In answer, the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said:

"The gods have decreed that hereafter your descendants

Will not be lacking in glory since Penelope has given birth to such a son as you.

But now, without fear of anyone, inform me about the following:

What have you to do with this crowd feasting here?

Is it is marriage, a banquet - or perhaps some public festival?

It is my opinion that they entertain themselves in this hall

In an overbearing, arrogant ill-mannered way

And any healthy man who happened to see them

Would be indignant at such disgraceful things."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:

" I shall, since you, as a guest, have enquired and asked me about these things.

This family was wealthy - as it was steadfastly blameless

While he who was its man resided here.

But now it is different since the gods resolved to bring us bad luck

Having concealed him more completely than any other mortal

Which injures me worse than if they had conquered him

While he was among his comrades in the land of the Trojans

Or when his companions were nearby after that fighting was finished.

For then, the entire Achaean race would have prepared a tumulus for him

With his son inheriting his honourable name, whereas now

He is without an honourable name having been snatched from us by abductors  
Who took him away silently and unobserved to leave me wounded and lamenting.  
But it is not only because of him that I am wounded and grieving  
But because I have other injuries from the bad luck given me by the gods.  
They are those eminent ones, there, who rule in the islands  
Of Dulichium, Samos, Zancythus of the forests  
And those Chiefs of rugged Ithica itself  
All of whom seek to court my mother and who are exhausting this household.  
She cannot refuse what would be an odious marriage  
As she cannot fittingly make an end of this matter  
250 And so they are killing this household by gnawing away at it  
Just as they could soon break me who is by myself into pieces."

Then Pallas Athena - angry at this - said to him:

"Before the gods! How great is the need here for the absent Odysseus -  
For him to set about these disrespectful ones with his fists!  
Would that he would arrive at the outer gate of this dwelling  
With his helmet on and holding his shield and two spears  
And as he was when I myself first saw him,  
At my own abode, drinking and enjoying himself  
He having set out from Ephyra and from Ilus son of Mermerus.  
He had gone there in that fast ship of his  
In search of a man-killing potion with which to poison his bronze-headed arrows:  
But that person would not give it since he believed he would be blamed  
By those gods who exist for aeons.  
But my own father give it to him, for they were great comrades.  
May it be the same Odysseus who engages those suitors  
So that they all quickly die of the injuries he gives them  
Because of that marriage they had hoped for!

But whether such things will be, depends on the gods:

On whether or not he on his returning obtains vengeance within his own dwelling.

As for now, I shall tell you of a plan to drive those suitors out of this dwelling

So respectfully listen to what I have to say.

Tomorrow, invite those heroic warriors, the Achaeans, to an assembly

Saying to them all - and invoke the gods as witness - that you have this plan

To tell those suitors to disperse to their own concerns

And your mother that if a desire to marry attacks her

She should go to the dwelling of her very powerful father

So that her own kin can prepare the wedding-festival

And arrange for the numerous gifts that go with such a well-loved daughter.

As for yourself, if you will trust me, I have good advice:

That you equip a ship with twenty of the best oarsmen

To go in search of he, your father, away a long while,

For some mortal may have word of him or you may hear

That voice from Zeus which often provides our tribes with the most information.

First go to Pylos to ask noble Nestor

And then on to Sparta to red-haired Menelaus

Who was the last of those bronze-armoured Achaeans to arrive.

For then if you hear that your father is alive or is returning,

Then you, though tired, should endure this for another year,

While if you hear that his being is no more and he is dead,

Then return to the fatherland that you love

To build his monument, perform as many funeral rites as are fitting,

And give up your mother to a man.

It is after you have done and achieved these things

That you should, with good judgement and courage, plan how to kill

Either by cunning or boldly, those suitors who are here in this dwelling -

For you must not occupy yourself with the things youngsters do,

Being no longer of that age.

Have you not been touched by how the noble Orestes  
Seized an honourable name for himself among all our clans by killing  
300 The cunning father-killer Aegisthus because of that killing of his well-known father?  
Thus should you, my friend - whom I see are strong and fully-grown -  
Be as brave, so that those born after you will speak well of you.

But now I must descend down to my fast ship  
And my companions, who cannot relax while I remain here.  
You must be vigilant, and heed what I have said."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:  
"Although a stranger, there is a comradely purpose in what you have declared -  
As from a father to his son - and I will not disregard it.  
But now, even though you are eager to journey on, remain here today -  
You can bathe and enjoy yourself as your heart desires  
So that you can go to your ship, pleased by your courage,  
With a valuable and very fine gift which will be treasured  
And such as comrades present when accepting or offering hospitality."

Then the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said in reply:  
"Since I long to travel again, do not detain me now  
For that gift which your heart exhorts you to present to me  
Can be given to me to carry back to my home when I return here.  
Choose a very fine one, and you will obtain something of similar value."

Such were the words of Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes -  
Who departed, unseen, as a bird when it has flown away.  
And she had given him, with his vigour, a purpose and a boldness  
As she had conjured up for him - more than anyone ever had - his father  
So that when he considered these things, he - full of amazement -  
Understood them, suspecting that his visitor had been one of the gods.  
Thus did he - resembling a god himself - rush toward those suitors.

But they were silent as they sat listening to the chant of a famous Bard  
Who chanted that saga of the misfortunes which Pallas Athena had decreed  
For those Achaeans who had returned from Troy.  
And hearing that divinely-inspired chanting in her upper chambers,  
That daughter of Icarus, the discerning Penelope,  
Had come forth from her rooms, shielding her face with a magnificent veil,  
To descend those high stairs - not by herself, but with two female servants -  
To stand by a column of the stoutly-built roof  
With those loyal attendants on either side of she  
Who, in tears, said this to that most honoured of Bards:  
"Phemius, since your knowledge of those bewitching chants -  
By which bards make famous the exploits of men and gods - is great,  
Chant another one as you sit with those there  
And they drink their wine in silence.  
For you should cease that injurious chant  
Which exhausts the heart within me since for a long while after  
I, more than anyone else, am struck by unbearable grief  
Because I yearn for that man who for a long while I have had only memories of -  
He who has an honourable name throughout both Hellas and Argos."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:

"Mother - why are you hostile to this most skilful of Bards

Whose purpose here is to provide enjoyment?

It is not Bards who are the cause of such things -

Rather, it is Zeus who causes them:

For it is He who bestows inventiveness upon each and every mortal

According to His will.

350 It is not right to revile the Bard for chanting about the unlucky fate of those Danaans

For our tribes give more applause for a saga

Which informs them all about some hearty person.

You should be informed about such courage and brave of heart

For Odysseus was not the only one who had his return from Troy destroyed:

There were many other men who were lost.

You should go to your chambers to manage your own work

Of weaving and spinning, and also command your attendants

To occupy themselves with their work. That mythos is of interest to all men -

And to me most of all because the dignity of this family now depends upon me."

And so she went back to her chambers with admiration of him,

For she was given courage by her son's vigorous words.

Thus with her female attendants she entered those highest of rooms

To weep for her beloved husband Odysseus

Until Athena of the beautiful blue eyes placed pleasing sleep onto her eyelids.

In the dimly-lit halls, the suitors all began shouting

As everyone of them voiced their wish to lie with her in intercourse,

Causing Telemachus - he full of vigour - to say to them:

"You who are suitors for my mother are unnecessarily abusive!

Now eat, and enjoy yourselves without any shouting

For it is a fine thing to listen to such a Bard as this

Who has a voice such as a god might have.

And, at the dawn of day, let us all go to seat ourselves

In the Meeting-Place where I will say to you in public

That you should go forth out of this dwelling

To do your feasting elsewhere, devour your own possessions

And be guests in turn in each other's homes.

But if you resolve that it is more agreeable and more favourable to you

To stand your ground and destroy one man's livelihood

Without paying any compensation, then eat on!

For I shall call aloud to the gods, who exist for aeons,  
So that from Zeus there will be a deed of revenge  
With you being destroyed in this dwelling with no compensation paid to your kin!"

Such were his words, and they all clenched their teeth,  
Astonished at Telemachus because of his courageous declaration.  
And it was Antinous, that son of Eupeithes, who was the first to speak to him.  
"Telemachus - it must be the gods themselves who have instructed you  
In bold declarations and how to courageously declare them!  
May that son of Chronos never make you the Chief  
Of this island of Ithica even if it is your father's inheritance!"

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:  
"Antinous - though you will be displeased by what I say,  
Were Zeus to offer me such a thing, my choice would be to take it.  
Even though you have said this is one of the worst things that can happen,  
It cannot be so bad to become a Chieftain -  
Wealth is swift to arrive and the person himself becomes honoured.  
Nevertheless, there are many other Achaean Chiefs,  
Even on this island of Ithica - both recent and established -  
Any one of which could have this, since noble Odysseus has been killed.  
As for me, I shall be master of my own family  
And those female slaves which noble Odysseus captured and gave to me."

Then Eurymachus, that son of Polybus, said to him in answer:  
400 "Telemachus - as to which Achaean will be the Chief  
Of this island of Ithica: that depends on the gods.  
But whatever, may you hold onto your own possessions and be master of your household.  
And - while there are settlements on Ithica - may the man who has the strength  
To counter your will and deprive you of your possessions, never arrive!  
But now, my brave man, I wish to ask you about that stranger.



From where did he come? What region did he claim was his own?

Where was he born and who are his ancestors?

Did he bring a message about the return of your father -

Or did he come here seeking something to his advantage?

For he got up and left very swiftly as if not to wait

For us to discover who he was - although there was nothing cowardly about him."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:

"Eurymachus - since my father's return has been destroyed

I no longer trust messages, however they arrive,

As I do not concern myself with the revelations my mother seeks

When she invites some soothsayer into this dwelling.

That stranger came from a Taphian comrade of my father -

He proudly affirmed he was Mentès, the son of battle-hardened Anchialus,

And Chief of those most excellent oarsmen, the Taphians."

So was he named by Telemachus who however had the judgement

To recognize an immortal god.

Then those suitors turned to ribald songs, and to dancing,

Desiring as they did to enjoy themselves until the end of day arrived.

And they were still enjoying themselves as the dark at the end of the day arrived

When each and every one of them went to take their rest within their own dwellings.

As for Telemachus - whose elevated chambers had been built to overlook

The very beautiful courtyard - he retired to his sleeping-place

To consider many different plans.

The loyal Eurycleia had gone with him, carrying burning torches.

She was the daughter of Ops, that son of Peisenor,

And had been the property of Laertes who had purchased her

For twenty oxen when she was newly ripe.

She was, while in his dwelling, like a loyal wife to him

Although to avert his wife's anger they never came together in his sleeping-place.  
It was she who carried burning torches for Telemachus  
And who, out of all of the servants, loved him the most  
For she had nursed him when he was young.  
So she opened the doors to his stoutly-built chambers  
And he, seating himself on his bed, took off his tunic  
To place it into the hands of that loyal now elderly woman  
Who, skillfully folding that tunic, hung it on a wooden peg  
Near to that ornately-carved bed.  
Then, leaving his chambers, she pulled the doors together  
By their silver rings and secured the bolt inside by its protruding thong.  
And he was there, covered by a sheepskin, all of the night  
As he occupied himself planning the journey which Athena had advised he take.

^^^

## **Book II**

When the red-fingers of that early-rising Bringer of Warmth appeared,  
The beloved son of Odysseus, rousing himself from his sleeping-place,  
Attended to his clothes, affixed a sharp sword over his shoulder,  
And bound to his healthy feet fine sandals,  
Resembling a god as he went forth from his chambers  
To command his clear-voiced Heralds  
To call those fierce, long-haired Achaeans to assemble.

And such was their summons that they came together swiftly.

And when they were all gathered at the assembly

He, armed with his bronze spear, went there -

Not by himself, for he took two of his hunting dogs with him.

And Athena graced him with an agreeable majesty

So that all the warriors there turned to look at him as he arrived

With the Elders giving way as he went to seat himself in his father's place.

The first to address the assembly was that heroic warrior, Aegyptius -

He who, now bent by age, had seen a great many things

And whose beloved son had gone with the noble Odysseus,

In those spacious ships, to Ilion of the well-bred horses.

This was Antiphus, master of the spear, who however was slaughtered in a hollow cave

By that savage Cyclops who then prepared him, last, as his evening meal.

Of his three other sons, one - Eurynomus - was among those suitors

While the other two had for a long while maintained their ancestral estates.

But he could not disregard the painful wound from that other son,

And it was this which had brought many a tear to he who now addressed that assembly:

"You men of Ithica - listen to what I have to say.

There has not been a meeting of this, our tribal assembly,

Since the noble Odysseus left with those spacious ships.

So who is it who has such a need -

Is it a young man, or one who is older, as I am?

Are troops about to arrive here - and he has heard a message

Which he will accurately relate since he was the first to hear it?

Or will he announce and tell of some other public concern?

He is certainly brave! May he therefore be fortunate with Zeus achieving for him

That excellence which he considers he wants."

Such were his words, and this was a propitious omen for that beloved son of Odysseus

Who was not seated for long because of his desire to address that assembly  
And who therefore stood up among them with the Herald, Peisenor -  
He experienced in giving sound advice - placing the sceptre of authority into his hands.  
Then - first in reply to that Elder - he said this:

"Elder, you shall soon know who that person is: he is not far from you.  
Since it is I who now has the most bad luck, I had the warriors assemble here  
Although I have not heard some message about troops being about to arrive  
Which I can accurately relate since I was the first to hear it.

Nor will what I announce and tell of be some other public concern.  
Rather, it is my own need because of two misfortunes that have befallen my family.  
There is the loss of my honourable father

Who once was your Chief and an attentive father to me,  
And there is something much greater which has happened to my entire family  
Which will swiftly and utterly wreck us with my own living being completely destroyed!

50 This is those suitors for my mother who press themselves around her contrary to her wishes

And who, although they are the beloved sons of the most eminent men here,  
Shiver at setting sail for the dwelling of Icarus, her father,  
So that he, setting a dowry for his daughter,  
Can give her to the person he chooses and who, of those who went there, he would favour.

Instead, every day they come and gather in our dwelling,  
Sacrificing our cattle, our sheep and our fattened goats,  
Feasting and wantonly drinking our strong wine,  
With many other things of ours being consumed.

And there is no man such as Odysseus

To defend this family from such a misfortune:

We cannot defend ourselves, and, had we done so,

It would have been bad for us because we have no one experienced in combat.

I myself would have defended them had I some troops on my side.

But what they are doing can no longer be tolerated - it is not honourable

How this family is being destroyed! You should be indignant  
And ashamed to face those other clans who dwell nearby.  
Also, you should be in dread of the wrath of the gods  
Lest they turn their anger upon you because of cowardly deeds.

Thus do I ask - by Zeus the Olympian and by the goddess Themis  
Who established such assemblies as these and who always ends them -  
That you who are my friends apply yourselves to this  
So that I am left alone to rub away at my own injurious grief.  
Or is it that my father - the honourable Odysseus - once opposed  
The will of those well-armed Achaeans causing them misfortune,  
And you by opposing my will are obtaining payment, causing me misfortune,  
Through encouraging those others? But then it would be better  
If it was you who were devouring my treasures and my herds  
For, were you eating them, I might obtain compensation  
By going around accosting others with the story,  
Demanding our possessions be returned, until all of them were given back.  
But instead you are now inflicting incurable wounds upon my heart."

So did he speak, in anger - but then he let the sceptre of authority fall to the ground  
As the fire of lamentation came upon him. And he had captured the sympathy  
Of all of the warriors there so that they were all silent with not one of them willing  
To answer Telemachus with harsh words:  
Except Antinous, who answered him by saying this:  
"Telemachus - how boldly you speak! How unrestrained is your strength!  
What is this insulting thing that you say? Do you wish to place such a brand on us?  
You should not have accused those Achaean suitors  
Since it is your mother, whom you love, who knows these things are to her advantage.  
For it is now the third year - and will soon be the fourth -  
During which she has distracted the passion in the hearts of those Achaeans.  
She gives all of us an expectation, with promises to every man

And messages being sent, although what she desires is something else.

There is also this other stratagem which she, on reflection, discovered:

In her dwelling she had a large weaving frame erected and on it weaved

Fine and very long threads, saying to us then:

"You young men who are my suitors - even though the noble Odysseus is dead

And you are eager to marry me, you must wait,

For I have this shroud to finish so that what has been spun

Will not be lost to the winds.

This is for the tomb of that heroic warrior Laertes

100 When that destructive fate which is the long-sleep of death overpowers him.

For otherwise some woman from among our Achaean clan would quite rightly revile me

Because he who had acquired so much would be laid to rest without a shroud."

Such were her words, and we with our strong passion for her trusted her.

But while she in daylight weaved that large tapestry,

When it was night, she - with flaming torches beside her - unravelled it.

And for three years while we of the Achaean clan trusted her, she tricked us.

Then, when the seasons of the fourth year had arrived,

One of the women - who knew of this for certain - told us

And we went to find her unravelling that splendid tapestry.

Thus - although it was contrary to her wishes - she was compelled to complete it.

Hence it is that we, her suitors, answer you so that you, with your courage,

Will know what all other Achaeans know.

You should provide an escort for your mother to go to her father,

Exhorting her to marry whomsoever he recommends who is agreeable to her.

If she encourages we who are of the Achaean clan for much longer, then she should

With courage consider those things which Athena so bestowed upon her -

She is skilled in intricate work and she excels in understanding what is to her advantage.

Indeed, we have no ancient knowledge of previous Achaean women -

They of the beautifully plaited hair, such as Tyro,

Alcmene, and Mycene who wore hers as a beautiful crown -  
Who could equal the resolution that Penelope has shown.  
Can it therefore be her fate to lack resolution in this?  
And your living and your possessions will be devoured  
For as long as she keeps that resolve  
Which the gods seem to have placed in her heart.  
For by this she acquires for herself great renown  
While for you there is only a yearning for what was a considerable living.  
As for us, we shall not go to our estates or indeed anywhere else  
Until she marries the Achaean which she herself desires."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:

"Antinous - how could I, contrary to her will, turn out from my dwelling  
She who produced and nourished me even were my father dead  
Or even if he is alive in some foreign land?  
I would be unfortunate because of the large compensation payable to Icarus  
Were I to choose to send my mother away.  
And there would be the misfortunes I would suffer caused by her father  
With daimons bringing me others because those dreaded Furies  
Would be invoked as my mother left to go forth from her dwelling.  
And our tribes would quite rightly revile me.  
No such tales will ever be told about me!

But as for you others - if I rightly revile your courage  
Then go forth from my dwelling, devour your own possessions  
And be guests in turn in each other's homes.  
But if you resolve that it is more agreeable and more favourable to you  
To stand you ground and destroy one man's livelihood  
Without paying compensation, then eat on!  
For I shall call aloud to the gods, who exist for aeons,  
So that from Zeus there will be a deed of revenge

With you being destroyed in my dwelling with no compensation paid to your kin!"

So spoke Telemachus, and Zeus - he whose perception is vast - sent him

Two eagles which were flying high above the summit of the mountain

From where they came down by means of the breeze that was blowing -

Their wings stretched out and near to each other -

150 Until they arrived above the middle of that meeting-place of the numerous opinions.

Then, they whirled around shaking their stout wings

And, with a deadly look about them, made for the heads of everyone there

Before tearing at each other's cheeks and throats with their talons.

Then they rushed away to the East, over the citadel and the dwellings

Of those who in astonishment had watched those birds with their own eyes

And whose passions were aroused because they wondered what might occur.

And it was that venerable, heroic warrior Halitherses, son of Mastor,

Who addressed them, for he excelled those of a similar age as he

In his knowledge of augury and in explaining omens.

His understanding of those there was good, and he spoke to them thus:

"You men of Ithica - listen to what I have to say.

And what I will make known I say especially to you suitors

Since you will be rolled down by a great injury

Because Odysseus cannot now be far from his loved ones

And may indeed already be nearby,

Planning that slaughter which will be the fate of all of you.

And he will also be the misfortune of many more of you who are here

And who dwell in Ithica of the beautiful sunsets.

But long before this, we should find some way of restraining them -

Although it would be better for them to restrain themselves now.

For I who have so prophesied am not lacking in experience,

Having a good knowledge of such things,



And what I announced would befall Odysseus is being achieved  
Just as I related it when the very resourceful Odysseus boarded his ship  
As the Argives were setting forth for Ilion.  
I announced then that many misfortunes would afflict him;  
That he would lose his many Comrades  
And arrive back at his home - unrecognized by anyone - in the twentieth year.  
And now all these things are being achieved."

Then Eurymachus, that son of Polybus, said in answer:  
"Old man, go on back to your family and make predictions  
About your descendants, for if you do not, they might suffer some misfortune or other!  
About this, even I am a better prophet than you  
For there are many birds who wander about during the daylight  
Which are not fateful - and Odysseus has perished far away from here.  
If you had gone and been lost with him,  
You would not now be declaring this thing a divine revelation  
As you would not now be unleashing the fury of Telemachus  
Nor receive from him a gift for your family, were he to provide one.  
About this, what I shall say will be achieved -  
That if you, who has a great knowledge of ancient things,  
Were advising a young man and so encouraging him to be savage,  
Then it would be particularly troublesome for him,  
Since he does not have the power for such deeds,  
But also for you, old man, for we would fix a penalty for you  
Which you, with your courage, would be indignant at  
As you paid it, and which would be a savage blow for you.

I myself, before everyone here, propose this for Telemachus:  
That he exhorts his mother to go back to her father  
So that her own kin can prepare the wedding-festival  
And arrange for the numerous gifts that go with such a well-loved daughter.

For, until then, we who are of this Achaeian tribe will not put an end  
To this difficult courting, for we do not fear anyone  
200 And certainly not Telemachus, however many tales he tells.  
Nor do we respect what you, old man, tell us is some divine revelation  
Yet to be fulfilled, and which makes us even more hostile to you.  
For we will damage his possessions by eating away at them -  
Perhaps until there is nothing left -  
For as long as she puts off marrying an Achaeian  
Since every day we who are rivals for her perfection wait for her  
And not once have we gone with any of those others  
Who would be suitable for us to take as a wife."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said in answer:  
"Eurymachus - and all you other proud suitors.  
I will not ask you again as I will not announce anything else  
Since, now, the gods and all Achaeians have observed this.  
Therefore, grant me a fast ship and twenty comrades  
Who can manage a journey, there and back, with me  
For I am going to Sparta and to Pylos of the sandy beaches  
To enquire if my father - who has been away a long while - is returning,  
For some mortal may have word of him or I may hear  
That voice from Zeus which often provides our tribes with the most information.  
And, if I hear that my father is alive or is returning,  
Then I will, though by then tired, endure this for another year,  
While if I hear that his being is no more and he is dead,  
Then I shall return to this, the fatherland that I love,  
To build his monument, perform as many funeral rites as are fitting  
And give up my mother to a man."

Such were his words, and he sat down again  
Whereupon there stood up among them Mentor -

He who had been a comrade of Odysseus, the distinguished -  
And whom Odysseus when about to set sail assigned to his family  
With him to trust Laertes and to be a stout guard for them all.  
He understood those there very well, and addressed them by saying this:  
"You men of Ithica - listen to what I have to say.  
No longer do I desire that your Chieftain be someone friendly and mild  
Nor one informed by a knowledge of what is fitting.  
Instead, he should be savage and treat you badly  
Since not one of you warriors has made mention of the most heroic Odysseus -  
He who was your Chief - and how he was as an indulgent father to you.  
I do not envy those arrogant suitors, employing their vigour to do a treacherous thing,  
For they have revealed themselves by so vigorously devouring  
The possessions of Odysseus who, so they say, will never return.  
But now it is this whole clan whom I quite rightly revile  
Since all of you sit there without calling out  
To accost those suitors, so stopping those few  
Because there are many more of you."

Then Leocritus, son of Euenor, said in answer:  
"You - the unlucky Mentor who has lost his purpose - why are you urging them  
To put an end to us? For it is difficult to get men,  
Even when they have the advantage of numbers, to go to war over some feast!  
And even were the noble Odysseus himself to arrive in Ithica  
While we proud suitors were in his dwelling  
And he through his courage sought eagerly to expel us from his home,  
Then, even though his woman had longed for it, there would be no rejoicing  
250 At his arrival since he would in that very place meet with his inauspicious fate  
Because we have the advantage of numbers.  
  
So as for you - what you have said is not fitting.  
But, now, let those warriors disperse, each to their own work

With Mentor and Halitherses aiding that person to go on his travels  
For they have been comrades of his father since before this began.  
And yet, I suspect that person will stay in Ithica for a long while yet,  
Listening out for messages, and also never complete those travels."

Such were his words, after which those there abandoned their assembly  
And dispersed each to their own families  
Except for those suitors who went to the dwelling of the most heroic Odysseus.  
As for Telemachus, he went away by himself to the sands of the beach  
Where, washing his hands in the grey salty sea, he invoked the goddess Athena:  
"Hear me! - You who, as a god, yesterday came to my dwelling  
To ask me to journey in a ship over the dark of the sea  
To inquire after the return of my father who has been away a long while.  
But now the whole of my Achaean clan are putting this off  
Chiefly because of those cowardly and overbearingly arrogant suitors."

Such were his words of invokation, and Athena came toward him  
Resembling Mentor in body and in speech,  
And addressed him, letting fly these words:  
"Telemachus - you will not be unlucky nor lacking in resolution  
If you hereafter instill into yourself the determination of your father  
Whose nature was to accomplish those deeds he said he would.  
For then, you will not be wandering about on your travels, with nothing accomplished.  
Yet if you were not begotten by Penelope from his seed  
Then I have no expectation of you accomplishing those things that you want.  
Few sons reach the level of their father -  
Most fall short, with only a few being better.  
So if you are, hereafter, not unlucky nor lacking in resolution  
And if Odysseus left behind in you at least some of his resourcefulness,  
Then I expect you to accomplish those deeds that you say you will.

As for those suitors - leave them to their plans and desires,  
For they have no judgement, no understanding and are unworthy.  
They do not see that the dark fate of death -  
Which will kill them all in one day - is getting nearer to them.  
And they will not keep you from those travels that you desire for much longer  
For I am your comrade, as I was to your father,  
And will prepare a fast ship for us since I am going with you.  
Therefore, go back to your dwelling to meet with those suitors  
And equip yourself with provisions, all of which should be put into vessels:  
The wine in amphoras and that nourishing food of mortals -  
Barley, for bread - in stout hide bags.  
And I myself by going among our clan will soon gather together  
Companions who of their own accord will go with us.  
Also, there are a great many ships on this island of Ithica,  
Both new and old, from which I will select the best one  
And have swiftly made ready for the vastness of the sea."  
  
So spoke Athena, the daughter of Zeus.  
And Telemachus did not stand there for long after that goddess had spoken  
But instead - absorbed by his anger - went to his dwelling  
Where he found those arrogant suitors in the courtyards of his home  
300 Slitting open his goats and roasting his pigs.  
And Antinous, laughing, went directly to Telemachus  
Calling out his name, and, taking hold of his hand, said to him:  
"Telemachus! How boldly you speak! How unrestrained is your strength!  
But do not concern your heart with matters of treachery - whether words, or deeds;  
Instead, eat and drink with me as you did before  
For our Achaean clan will bring about for you  
A ship with elite oarsmen so you can swiftly go  
To Pylos of the sandy beaches for information about your proud father."

But Telemachus - he full of vigour - said to him in answer:

"Antinous - I cannot feast with you who are so overbearingly insolent,  
And be at my ease and good humoured, without speaking out.  
For were they not sufficient for you - the abundance of my possessions  
That you suitors devoured then when I was young?  
But now I am old enough, I have enquired about things for myself  
And, having listened to the stories, there has grown within me  
A passion to cast upon you an injurious fate which I will try to do  
Whether I am here among our clan or whether I go to Pylos!  
And my announcement of my travels will not have been in vain  
For even though I cannot yet be master of a ship or oarsmen,  
I could still go as a passenger  
Which is, I suppose, to your advantage."

So did he speak, pulling his hand from the hand of Antinous.  
And, as those suitors occupied themselves with their feasting,  
They insulted Telemachus and made cutting remarks about him,  
With one of those overbearing young men saying this:  
"Telemachus is certainly contriving to shed our blood,  
And to assist him he will bring others from Pylos of the sandy beaches  
Or even from Sparta, so great is his yearning for this.  
Or perhaps he will go to the fertile lands of Ephyra  
To obtain from there that life-destroying potion  
Which he will place into our wine in order to kill us all."

And another of those overbearing young men said this:  
"But it is possible that he in a spacious ship while wandering about  
Will perish, like Odysseus, far from his folk -  
Although this would greatly increase our work  
Since we would have to divide his possessions among ourselves  
And permit his mother - and whomsoever took her as wife - to have his dwelling!"

Such were their words, and Telemachus went across to that wide, high-ceilinged  
Storeroom of his father where there was an abundance of fragrant oil;  
Clothing in chests; gold and bronze in heaps;  
And wines of an agreeable vintage in casks -  
Which, being unblended, were the most excellent of drinks -  
And which stood close to one another around the walls  
For when Odysseus, having endured a great many misfortunes, returned to his home.  
These were behind stout double doors which were locked  
With a housekeeper nearby during the day and the night  
Who, being shrewd and resolute, was the guardian of everything there.  
This was Eurycleia, the daughter of Ops who himself was the son of Peisenor.  
And Telemachus - having called out her name - said this to her beside that chamber:  
"My dear nurse - pour out for me into amphoras some of that agreeable wine,  
350 Although not the most delicious that you guard  
For it is possible that Odysseus the unlucky, being born of Zeus,  
Will arrive someday, having escaped both from death and his unfortunate fate.  
Fill twelve for me, fitting lids to them all.  
Also, put barley - for bread - into well-sewn skins,  
And give me twenty measures of mill-ground barley-grain.  
And you are to be the only one who knows of this.  
Now have all these things collected together  
For I shall take them away at the end of the day  
When my mother, planning to go to her bed, ascends to her upper chambers.  
This is because I am going to Sparta, and to Pylos of the sandy beaches,  
To enquire about my father - for I may hear something there."  
  
So he spoke, and his old nurse, Eurycleia - who loved him - cried out  
And began to weep before letting fly these words:  
"Dear Telemachus - why are you considering such an aim as that?"

Why choose to cast yourself away on many other lands,  
And so be alone, when you are so loved, here? For your father, Odysseus -  
He born of Zeus - died among foreigners while far from his clan.  
And, as soon as you are gone, those others will thereafter be treacherously plotting  
How they can, by cunning, destroy you and so divide among themselves all these things  
here.  
And there is no necessity for you to endure the misfortunes  
Of the inexhaustible sea nor those of a wanderer."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said to her in answer:  
"My dear nurse - have courage, for this is not being done without the assistance of a god.  
Now, take an oath not to tell my mother about this  
Before either the eleventh or the twelfth day has arrived -  
Unless of course she, having heard something, rushes forth to seek me -  
For by then she should not lament and so harm her beautiful complexion."

So he spoke, and that elderly woman swore a great oath not to do that.  
Then she - having completed that oath - immediately went  
To pour out for him wine into amphoras,  
And to put barley - for bread - into well-sewn skins.  
As for Telemachus, he went back into his dwelling to meet those suitors  
Whereupon the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes -  
Resolved to do something else.  
So, resembling Telemachus, she went throughout the whole of the citadel  
Bringing to every man she had selected the revealing story  
And exhorting them, at the end of the day, to assemble by the fast ship  
Which belonged to Noëmon, the illustrious son of Phronius, and which she asked him for.  
And he gave his approval willingly.

With the setting of the sun, all the pathways became shadowy  
And she had them drag that fast ship into the sea  
And place in it all the kinds of equipment that such a ship, for many oarsmen, carries.



After they had moored it on the edge of the harbour, the goddess assembled together  
Those honourable companions so as to give encouragement to each and every one of them.  
Then the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - resolved to do something  
else.

Thus she went to the dwelling of the most heroic Odysseus  
Where she spread over those suitors an agreeable tiredness  
Which caught them as they drank so that their goblets fell from their hands.  
And they did not remain there long, but roused themselves to go and sleep in their homes  
Because of the tiredness which she brought down upon their eyes.

Then Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - went to speak with Telemachus,  
400 Calling him out from his large, well-situated dwelling  
Where she, resembling Mentor in body and in speech, said this:  
"Telemachus - your well-armed, fierce, Achaeans companions are now waiting  
At their oars, ready to go forth with you.  
Therefore, let us go and no longer put off these travels."

Such were the words of Pallas Athena, who swiftly led the way  
With Telemachus walking behind her.  
But when they had descended down to the sea and their ship,  
They discovered their companions - fierce Achaeans - on the beach.  
And Telemachus - strong and admirable - said this to them:  
"Comrades! Since all our provisions are now assembled in my dwelling,  
Let us bring them here. And be assured - my mother does not know of this,  
Nor do any of my servants, except one, who heard the story from me."

Such were his words, and they followed him,  
Carrying everything down - with that son of Odysseus encouraging them -  
To place it in that ship for many oarsmen.  
Athena was the first to board that ship where she seated herself in its stern.  
Next came Telemachus, who seated himself beside her.  
Then the others, having cast off and rolled up the stern ropes,

Came aboard to seat themselves at their oars.  
So it was that Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - sent them a fair-following breeze  
Which strongly blew from the West to rush them over that wine-dark sea  
With Telemachus calling out encouragement as his comrades  
Took hold of the rigging. And they harkened to this encouragement  
As they hoisted the pine-wood mast into its hollowed-out stay  
By those forestays which held it in place,  
And hauled up the white sails by those skillfully-braided ox-hide ropes.  
Thus did that wind blow upon the main sail  
So that the keel of the ship loudly went through the purple sea-swell  
With them settling-down to their journey as they were hastened through the sea-swell,  
Having secured the rigging on that black ship.  
Then they set up jars which they filled to the brim with wine  
And poured libations to those undying gods who have existed for aeons:  
But especially to that daughter of Zeus with those beautiful blue eyes.  
Thus did that ship voyage on its journey for the whole of that night  
Until the dawn of day.

^^^

### **Book III**

As the sun ascended into a gleaming bronze sky, it left behind  
That most beautiful water's edge to reveal -  
To both the immortal ones and those mortal men -  
The tilled, grain-giving fields of Pylos

Where Neleus had built his well-situated citadel.

For they had arrived there, as - on the sands of the beach - bulls, black all over,  
Were being sacrificed to the azure-haired one who makes the earth to tremble.

There were nine groups of them, each of five hundred

And each of which had presented nine bulls.

So it was that while those there feasted on the sacrificial hearts and livers -

With the thighs being burnt for the gods -

Telemachus and his comrades went directly in to land, furling up the sails onto the mast

Of that well-balanced ship and mooring her so that they could go ashore.

Athena was the first to leave that ship, and, as Telemachus followed her,

The goddess - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said this to him:

"Telemachus - you must not any longer go unnoticed,

Since you have sailed over the sea for this: so that you can find out

What destiny your father followed and if, and where, the earth has concealed him.

So now go directly to Nestor, that subduer of wild-horses,

For I know that he conceals his own abilities from others.

And, when you ask him, he will, because he is so very strong, speak directly

Without missing his target as he will never, by words, deceive you."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said to her in answer:

"Mentor - how shall I approach him? How do I greet him?

For I have no experience of giving eloquent speeches,

And a young man should not show himself up when asking an Elder something."

In answer, Athena - the goddess with those beautiful blue eyes - said:

"Telemachus - what you understand by yourself you will have an opinion about;

As for other things, a divinity will offer you advice,

For I am in no doubt that you could not have been born,

And would not have grown up, without the aid of the gods."

Such were the words of Pallas Athena who swiftly led the way,

With Telemachus walking behind her,  
Until they arrived at where the clans of Pylos were assembled into groups  
With Nestor seated with his sons as his comrades  
Were preparing a feast by roasting meat on spits.  
And when those men saw the strangers, they all crowded round them,  
Raising their arms in salutation and inviting them to stay.  
The first to reach them and do this was Peisistratus, Nestor's son,  
Who raised his arm in salutation to both of them and had them seated  
On soft sheepskins there on that sandy beach  
Near to his father, and his brother Thrasymedes,  
Where he gave them a share of the sacrificial hearts and livers,  
Poured wine into a gold chalice  
And, raising his goblet to them in welcome, addressed Athena -  
That daughter of Aegis-carrying Zeus - by saying this:  
"Will you, our guests, drink to and so honour the Lord Poseidon?  
For it is his feast which you, arriving here, have chanced upon.  
And if you do - as is only fitting - dedicate this drink to the god,  
Then afterwards offer this chalice, of agreeable wine, to this person, here,  
So that he can also dedicate it to the god. For I suspect that he  
Drinks to and so honours our immortal ones, and all mortals should yield to the gods.  
But since he is younger than you - about the same age as me -  
50 I offer this gold chalice to you first."

Such were his words, and he placed that chalice of agreeable wine  
Into the hands of Athena who was pleased because that vigorous, worthy man  
Had offered her that gold chalice first.  
And she, after taking many drinks in honour of the Lord Poseidon, asked this:  
"Poseidon - you who possess the earth - listen to me!  
Since I have drunk to and so honoured you, do not refuse to accomplish  
These deeds. First, bestow upon Nestor and his sons glory in battle,

And then reward all the clans of Pylos because of this glorious sacrifice of oxen.  
Also, permit Telemachus and myself to return when we have undertaken  
That which we came here, in our dark ship, to do."

Such did she ask for, although she was the one who would accomplish them all.  
So it was that she gave that very fine two-handled chalice to Telemachus,  
And the beloved son of Odysseus asked for the same things.

Then, when the meat was roasted, it was removed from the spits  
And divided up into shares with everyone partaking in a most glorious feast  
Until the desire for food and drink left them

When Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan - gave the first speech:

"Only now, after they have eaten their fill, is it proper  
To question strangers and ask them what clan they are.  
So, you who are our guests - what clan are you? From where  
Have you come by way of the sea?  
Are you traders? Or wanderers, blown by the winds,  
Who, as pirates, voyage over the sea at the risk of your lives,  
Bringing misfortune to foreigners?"

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - gave his answer boldly  
For he had understood what Athena had suggested  
So that he might ask about his absent father:

"Nestor, son of Neleus: esteemed warrior of our Achaean tribe!  
Since you ask what clan are we, I shall tell you.

We are Ithacans, from the settlement below Mount Neion.  
Our task is our own, and we do not speak on behalf of our folk.  
We are seeking to hear any information concerning my father,  
The noble Odysseus - he of steadfast resolve - of whom it is said  
That he fought with you when you emptied that citadel of its Trojans.  
Of all those others who did battle with the Trojans,

We have been informed where each of those who perished were so unluckily destroyed.

But the son of Chronos has not granted us any information about Odysseus  
And no one has been able to tell us, for certain, where he perished -  
Whether he was brought down on land by a man opposed to his purpose,  
Or whether by the surging waves of a tempestuous sea.  
So that is why I now bow to you - to ask if you are willing  
To tell me how he who was born to endure many misfortunes  
So unluckily perished, for you may have seen it with your own eyes,  
Or heard the story from some traveller.  
And do not seek to please me because you respect me  
Or have some affection for me -  
But tell me exactly how it was if you chanced to see it.  
I ask you this since perhaps my father - the honourable Odysseus -  
Having given you his loyalty, achieved the deeds he said he would  
100 Against the Trojans in their land where our Achaean tribe suffered such bad luck.  
If this is so, mention it to me now, relating it without missing your target."

Then Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan - answered him thus:  
"My friend - I shall mention our afflictions then which we, the sons of this Achaean clan,  
Endured with indomitable determination there in that land.  
For it was there that we had to forage for booty - both on land  
And in ships over the dark of the sea - wherever Achilles led us!  
It was there that we did battle with that strong community governed by Priam;  
There where the best among us were slain!  
For there lies war-loving Aias; there lies Achilles;  
And Patroclus - whose advise was worthy of a god.  
There lies my own beloved son, the strong and brave Antilochus,  
Who had distinguished himself as a runner, and in single combat.  
And many other misfortunes afflicted us there -  
Who of our tribe could recite the whole saga?  
Because of the misfortunes which afflicted the noble Achaeans there

You would, if you remained here, be still finding out about them after five or six years,  
Although they would soon encourage you to return to the land of your fathers.

For nine years we attacked them - using every kind of stratagem -  
So as to fasten misfortune upon them, although the son of Chronos  
Hardly ever allowed this to be achieved.

And no man there tried to be the equal of Odysseus in resourcefulness,  
For your noble father - if indeed you are his offspring -  
Was vastly superior to them in every kind of stratagem.

But now that I look closely at you, I am amazed -

For even your voice resembles his, and the voice

Of any other young man would not have this resemblance.

Also, the noble Odysseus and I were there, together, all that while,  
Never once divided in our aims or when we addressed the clan-assemblies.

So it was that we with our purposeful aims, and resolute of heart,

Planned what would be best for the Argives.

And, after we had sacked that great citadel of Priam,

We proceeded to our ships. But a god would scatter our Achaeen clans

With Zeus - who understood them - resolving on an injurious home-coming

For the Argives, since not all of them had shown good judgement or been fair.

Thus were many of them pursued by fateful misfortunes

Because of the destructive rage of that blue-eyed daughter of a most valiant father

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus.

So it was that those two summoned all the Achaeen clans to an assembly -

Foolishly and against custom because at the setting of the sun

When those of our Achaeen tribe arrived full of wine.

And there, the sons of Atreus gave speeches as to why they had assembled those warriors

With Menelaus exhorting all the Achaeans

To consider returning to their homes over the vastness of the sea.

But Agamemnon was most displeased by this since his plan

Was for them to remain there to offer sacrifices of oxen  
To save those warriors from the mighty fury of Athena.  
In this, he was immature, not knowing that she would never yield about that,  
And no god - having existed for aeons - swiftly changes what they have resolved to do.  
Thus did those two stand there exchanging angry words  
As there suddenly arose from those well-armed Achaeans an extraordinary clamour  
150 Because they were divided among themselves as to which plan was best.  
And that night, there was anger among us as we excitedly considered them,  
Although Zeus it was who so badly injured us.

With the dawning of day, some of us dragged our ships into the beautiful sea  
To place in them our possessions and our well-bosomed concubines,  
While half of all the warriors remained to stay there with Agamemnon,  
Son of Atreus, who was a watchful guard for his warriors.  
We, the other half, having embarked, set sail - and swiftly did we go  
As if some god had spread great monsters upon that sea!  
Thus we arrived at Tenedos where we sacrificed to the gods  
Since we longed for our homes. But a fierce Zeus did not yet allow us to return  
And stirred up an injurious quarrel to divide us yet again.

Thus did those loyal to the very canny Chieftain Odysseus - he skilled in combat -  
Turn their ships around to go back,  
So bringing pleasure to Agamemnon, son of Atreus.  
As for me and those assembled with me, we fled in our ships  
Since we knew a daimon was devising to bring us bad luck.  
The war-loving son of Tydeus, and his comrades, also fled  
As did red-haired Menelaus who left after them  
And who caught us at Lesbos where we were eager for the long voyage  
Either by going up above rugged Chios  
And past the island of Psyra - holding it on our left -  
Or by going below Chios through the storms of Mimas.



About this we asked the god to reveal to us a sign  
And he exhorted us to cut through the middle of the sea to Euboea  
In order to swiftly pass that bad luck by.

Then, a loud-sounding favourable breeze blew,  
And so very swiftly did we escape by way of that fish-full sea  
That it was during the night that we came to Geraestus  
Where we placed many thigh bones from sacrificed bulls  
On the altar of Poseidon, having measured-out how vast was that sea.  
And, on the fourth day while the comrades of Diomedes - son of Tydeus  
And subduer of wild horses - and he himself, moored their ships in Argos,  
I held to my course for Pylos, since that favourable breeze  
Never once ceased after the god began to breathe it out.

Thus, my friend, I arrived here without any information about  
And without having seen who, of those Achaeans, was saved and who perished.  
However, while I have been here in this my homeland, I have heard rumours  
And shall, as is only fitting, inform you of them since I cannot conceal them from you.  
It is said that those fierce Myrmidons, masters of the spear, were lucky  
And did return, commanded as they were by the illustrious son of the very brave Achilles.  
Also lucky was Philoctetes, the glorious son of Poias,  
And Idomeneus who brought back to Crete every one of his comrades  
Who had survived the fighting - for the sea did not take any of them from him.

As for one of the sons of Atreus - even though you are far away, you must have heard  
How Aegisthus plotted to so miserably destroy him on his arrival,  
And how he himself so painfully paid the penalty for it.  
For it is good for a man to leave behind a son when he is killed,  
For then that son can avenge his father's death  
As the son of that renowned man did to the treacherous killer Aegisthus!  
You also, my friend - whom I see are fully-grown and strong -

200 Could be as brave as Orestes, for then those born after you will speak well of you."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said to him in answer:

"Nestor, son of Neleus: esteemed warrior of our Achaeen tribe!

That person did indeed take his revenge - and his name is now widely honoured

Among Achaeans who will tell the saga for generations to come.

Perhaps the gods will give such strength to me

So that I can take my revenge upon those suitors who grievously overstep the mark,

And who, in their arrogance, are dishonourably plotting against me.

But the gods have not allotted such a good fortune as that

To either my father or me so that now I have to undertake that entirely alone."

Then Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan - said to him in answer:

"My friend - since you have, in speaking to me, mentioned this,

There are indeed rumours of many suitors for your mother being in your home

Against your will who are plotting to do you harm.

So tell me - did you willingly submit to their domination

Or has some portent from some god caused the folk of your clan to shun you?

Who is there who knows when Odysseus will arrive

To pay them back for their violations - either by himself

Or together with his own Achaeen clan?

But perhaps Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - will choose to befriend you

As she did Odysseus to whom she gave great glory in battle

While he was in the land of the Trojans where we Achaeans endured much bad luck:

And I have never seen the gods so visibly befriend someone

As Pallas Athena so visibly assisted him.

If she did consider you of value and so choose to befriend you

Then many of those suitors would be made to forget about that marriage!"

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said to him in answer:

"Venerable sir - what you speak of has not yet been brought about

Although it is good of you to, and I admire you for, saying it.

But I no longer expect it since the gods have not chosen to do this."

In answer the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said:

Telemachus! What a word you have let escape through the barrier of your teeth!

It is easy for a god, should they choose to, to keep a mortal safe even when far away.

My own wish would be to endure much bad luck

And then travel back to my country to behold the day of my return

Rather than travel directly back and be slain in my own home,

As Agamemnon was slain because of the treachery of his wife and Aegisthus.

Yet death is there for everyone alike - and not even the gods

Are able to protect a mortal they have befriended

When that destructive fate which is the long-sleep of death overpowers him."

Then Telemachus - he full of vigour - said to her in answer:

"Mentor - let us no longer speak about this thing, even though it afflicts us,

For I am almost certain that Odysseus will never return since the immortal ones

Must surely by now have planned some dark fate for him, as well as his death.

Instead, I now wish to ask Nestor some questions to find out about some other things,

For he understands others and knows more about our customs than them,

Having been - so it is said - a Chieftain for three generations of mortals,

And, to look at, he seems to me to be one of those immortals.

Nestor, son of Neleus - disclose to me the story of how

Agamemnon, son of Atreus and chieftain of vast domains, did die.

Where was Menelaus? And what deceitful plan did the treacherous Aegisthus use

250 Since he did kill someone so much stronger than himself?

Was Menelaus, then, wandering among other tribes, and not in Achaean Argos,

Thus giving that person the courage to kill?"

Then Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan - said to him in answer:

"Young man - for you I shall give a speech which will disclose everything.

Surely you have your own opinion about what would have happened  
If the red-haired Menelaus, son of Atreus, had returned from Troy  
To find Aegisthus alive and in his home.  
For then Aegisthus would have died without ever having soil heaped upon him  
Because left out in the open far from the settlement  
For dogs and birds to feast upon, with no Achaean women  
Weeping for him, such was the magnitude of his treacherous deed!  
For it was while we were at Troy, partaking in numerous combats,  
That he - secure in horse-loving Argos - was gratifying himself  
And bewitching Agamemnon's wife with numerous speeches.  
At first, however, Clytaemnestra refused to do what was unseemly for someone  
As well-bred as her, for she had an excellent understanding of what was required.  
Also, there was with her a Bard who had been commanded by that son of Atreus  
To guard his wife while he himself was away at Troy.  
But then the gods bound to her the fate of being conquered,  
And Aegisthus had that Bard taken to and left upon an uninhabited island  
To be found by, and game for, birds of prey.  
Thus did he who was willing lead she who was willing to his home.  
Because of this, he burnt many thighs from bulls on the altar of the gods  
As he hung up many fine tapestries and many fine things of gold as offerings,  
For he never expected that his desire to so complete his work would be fulfilled.

It was after this that we - that son of Atreus and I - set sail together  
From the land of the Trojans, for we were good comrades.  
Thus we reached sacred Sunium, headland of the Athenian clan,  
Where the arrows of Phoebus Apollo came to the steersman  
Of Menelaus' ship and painlessly killed him  
As he held between his hands the rudder of his then swiftly sailing ship.  
This was Phrontis, son of Onetor, who was superior to anyone from our tribes  
In steering a ship when storm-winds rushed upon it.

So Menelaus was detained there, even though he was eager to journey on,  
Until he had buried and completed the funeral rites of his comrade.  
But when he went forth again over the dark sea  
In his finely-carved ship, he swiftly arrived near to that high mountain at Maleia  
Where Zeus - he who perceives things from afar - planned a hostile journey for them.  
So he breathed upon them to spread around them a loud-sounding stormy wind  
With mountainous surging waves as big as monsters from the sea!  
Thus he divided up those ships, with some being driven toward that part of Crete  
Where the Cydonian clan had settlements beside the Iardanus river.

This was where - at Gortyn's end with its cloudy waters -  
A smooth rock rises high out of the sea,  
And where Notos - the South Wind - pushes great surging waves toward  
The adverse side of the Gulf, with that narrow rock dividing  
Those great surging waves before they go to Phaestus.  
Some of the ships made it there, but the men in them just escaped destruction  
As those surging waves smashed those ships on the reefs.  
And five of those ships with the azure-painted bows  
300 Were driven by that wind and its sea toward Egypt  
Where Menelaus was presented with considerable provisions and gold  
Before he with his ships wandered among foreign-speaking tribes.

Meanwhile, Aegisthus was in his homeland deceitfully planning treachery.  
After he had killed that son of Atreus, he enslaved his own clansfolk  
And ruled over them in gold-rich Mycene for seven years.  
But the eighth year was unlucky for him, for the noble Orestes arrived  
From an Athenian settlement and slaughtered that father-killer,  
The treacherous Aegisthus, for the killing of Orestes' well-known father.  
After that slaughter, Orestes entertained his Argive clan by a wake  
For his mother, whom he hated, and for the cowardly Aegisthus.  
And, that very same day, Menelaus - he brave in combat - arrived,

Bringing with him vast wealth: as much as his ships could carry.

As for you, my friend - do not wander far from your home for long

Having left behind in your home your possessions and those overbearing insolent men,

Or they will divide up and so devour all your possessions

And your travels will become infamous!

But now, I exhort you to go to Menelaus

For it is not that long since he arrived back from tribes in those foreign lands

From where he must have considered his return to be unlikely

Since it was those storm-winds which were the cause of his wrong course

Out into the vastness of that sea from which, during any year,

Not even birds arrive from, so vast and formidable is it.

You could go to him in your ships with your comrades,

Or you could go by land, for there are chariots and horses here

And my own sons to escort you to where

Is the noble Lacedaemon clan of the red-haired Menelaus.

And, when you ask him something, he will speak to you without missing his target

As he would never, by words, deceive you since he is so very strong."

Such were his words, and, with the going-down of the sun, darkness arrived.

Then the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said this:

"Venerable sir - you have related those things correctly.

Well now - shall we offer up the tongues of those bulls, pour out wine,

So that, having made libations to Poseidon and the other immortals,

We, your guests, can concern ourselves with sleeping since it is the hour for it?

Because what was clear to us is now becoming nebulous,

It is no longer fitting for us to continue to sit here

At this god's feast. Thus, we should take our leave of you."

Such were the words of that daughter of Zeus, and they harkened to them,

With Officers pouring water over their hands

While boys filled jars ready for their drinking  
And placed into the goblets of everyone there the first offering of wine.  
Then, while standing, libations were made and those tongues cast into the fire,  
With everyone then drinking as much as their hearts desired  
Until Athena and Telemachus - he of supreme nobility -  
Were about to take their leave to go back to their spacious ships.  
But Nestor detained them there by saying this to them:  
"May Zeus and all the other immortal gods defend me  
From you going from what is mine to your fast ships  
As if you were leaving someone who, being poor, had no night garments  
And who had so few coverings and rugs in his dwelling  
350 That neither he nor any guest of his could sleep comfortably!  
I, however, do have coverings and beautiful rugs  
And no son of Odysseus will lay himself down to sleep  
On the deck of his ship so long as I am alive  
And so long as there are children of mine left in my home  
To provide hospitality for any guest who arrives at my dwelling."

In answer, the goddess Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - said:  
"My friend - your words are well-taken. It is certainly fitting  
For Telemachus to yield over this, for it would be much more agreeable for him.  
Thus he will accompany you when you go to rest in your home.  
I, however, must go to our black ship  
To re-assure our comrades and tell them all about this  
For I am the only one among them who can call himself an Elder.  
The rest are young men who accompany us out of comradeship,  
All of them being about the same age as the very brave Telemachus.  
So now I should go to lay myself down to rest upon our spacious black ship.  
And, at the dawn of day, I shall go to the very brave Cauconian clan,  
For they owe me some booty from a while ago which is not a small amount.

Now, since this young man is a guest in your homeland,  
Provide him with a chariot, a son of yours as escort,  
And horses who excel because of their agility and strength."

After giving voice to these words, Athena - she with those beautiful blue eyes - departed,  
Appearing as a sea-eagle to them. And everyone who saw this was amazed  
With that venerable Elder so astonished by what he had seen with his own eyes  
That he took hold of Telemachus by the hand and addressed him with these words:  
"My friend - I do not believe you will ever lack courage or be unlucky  
If the gods so escort and accompany you while you are still young!  
For that could be no one other than she who inhabits the Halls of Olympus  
And who is that daughter of Zeus born near Triton who presides over booty!  
She it was who valued your noble father above other Argives.

My Lady - favour me by granting noble renown  
To me, my offspring and she, my wife, whom I respect.  
To you, My Lady, I shall sacrifice an unblemished, untamed, broad-faced ox  
Which no one has ever tried to place a yoke upon  
And whose horns I shall - before the sacrifice - cover all over with gold."

Such were the words he addressed to Pallas Athena, who heard them.  
So it was that Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan -  
Led his sons, relatives and Telemachus away from there to his very fine dwelling.  
And, after arriving at the splendid dwelling of that Chieftain,  
They, in proper order, seated themselves on chairs and on benches.  
Then that venerable Elder poured into a vessel  
An agreeable wine in its eleventh year which a female servant  
Had opened for him by rolling back its covering veil.  
This was what that venerable Elder poured into a vessel from which he made  
Many libations in honour of Athena, the daughter of Aegis-carrying Zeus.

Then, after the libations when everyone had drunk as much as their hearts desired,



Every one of them went to lie down in that dwelling  
Where Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan -  
Gave Telemachus - the beloved son of the most heroic Odysseus - a place to sleep:  
The wooden bed under the high-ceilinged porch  
400 Where he was near to Peisistratus - master of the spear and among the best of men -  
Who of all those sons of Nestor had still to be married.  
Nestor himself slept in the innermost chamber of that lofty dwelling  
Where his woman, the mistress of that dwelling, had prepared his bed.  
  
Then, when the red-fingers of that early-rising Bringer of Warmth appeared,  
Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan - came forth to seat himself  
Upon those polished stones - white and glistening as if covered in oil -  
Which were in front of his lofty gates  
And upon which Neleus - he whose advise was worthy of a god - used to sit  
Before it was his fate to be slain by Hades.  
But now it was the Gerenian, Nestor, who sat there  
As guardian of that Achaean clan, holding the sceptre of authority.  
His sons left their chambers to assemble and gather round him there:  
These were Echephron, Stratius, Perseus, Aretus and the heroic Thrasymedes.  
The sixth to arrive was that heroic warrior Peisistratus  
Who brought with him and who seated among them, the noble Telemachus.  
Then Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan - directed them thus:  
"My sons -it is my wish that you swiftly accomplish these things for me,  
Because the first thing I must do is offer up a sacrifice to Athena  
Who was visible to us when she came to our rich feast for that god.  
So, one of you should go the fields so that an ox is swiftly brought here  
Having been urged on by one of our herdsmen.  
Another of you should go the black ship of the noble Telemachus  
To lead here all of his comrades, leaving only two behind.  
Another of you should go to command the goldsmith Laercus to come here

So that the horns of that ox can be covered all over with gold.

The rest of you should remain here after telling the female servants

Within this splendid dwelling to prepare a feast

And to provide, for everyone, chairs, benches and clear water."

Such were his words, and all of his sons occupied themselves with those things

So that an ox arrived from the fields; the comrades of the vigorous Telemachus

Arrived from their well-balanced ship; the goldsmith arrived bearing in his arms

Those bronze tools with which he accomplished his art:

A hammer, anvil and well-made fire-tongs

Which he used to work gold. Athena also arrived.

To be present at the sacrifice. Then the venerable Nestor - master of horse -

Gave the gold which the goldsmith prepared and then placed around the horns of the ox

To honour the goddess who would be pleased when she saw it.

It was Stratius and the noble Echephron who led that ox by its horns.

With them was Aretus who had conveyed from a store-room

A decorated bowl of water which he carried in one hand

While his other hand held a basket full of barley.

Near to them was Thrasymedes - he steadfast in the tumult of battle -

Who held in his hands a double-headed axe with which to strike the ox

While Perseus held the bowl for the blood. The venerable Nestor - master of horse -

Began the sacrifice by washing his hands and casting barley over the ox.

Then, with many invocations to Athena, he made the first offering

By casting hairs from the head of the ox into the fire.

And when he had cast the barley and made his invocations,

One of his sons - the very brave Thrasymedes -

Went to the ox and struck it so that the double-headed axe

450 Just cut into the tendons of the neck to release from it its strength.

At this, the women there - the daughters and female relatives of Nestor,

And Eurydice, his wife, eldest of the daughters of Clymenus - made loud ululations.

Then Nestor's other sons lifted the ox off the ground and held it  
So that Peisistratus - among the best of men - could slit its throat.  
Thus did its dark blood pour out from it as the life in its bones was released.  
Swiftly then did they dismember it, as they swiftly and fittingly cut off  
The thighs still whole, covered then all over with fat and placed more meat upon them.  
This was what that venerable Elder placed into the flames  
From forked wood, over which he poured a libation of wine.  
Then those young men came and stood beside him, holding in their hands five-pronged forks.  
After the thighs were burnt and they had partaken of the heart and liver,  
They cut the rest of the meat into joints,  
Some of which they pierced right through to stick them  
Onto the spits that they held in their hands  
So that they could roast the meat by holding out those spits.

Meanwhile, Telemachus had been bathed by the beautiful Polycaste,  
She who was the ripest of those daughters of Nestor, son of Neleus.  
And when she had bathed him, she anointed his body with oil from olives  
And put upon him a handsome tunic and cloak  
So that he resembled an immortal as he went forth from that bathing-place  
To seat himself near to Nestor, who was as a watchful guard for his warriors.

Thus did they stay there feasting on what they took for themselves -  
Having roasted the rest of the meat, with attentive officers  
Pouring out wine for them into goblets of gold -  
Until the desire for food and drink left them  
When Nestor - that master of horse from the Gerenian clan - said this:  
"My sons - let there be brought here for Telemachus  
Horses with beautiful manes and a chariot  
To harness them to so that he can undertake his journey swiftly."

Such were his words, and they, harkening to them, were fast in obeying them

For they soon had those horses harnessed to a chariot.  
Then after those women who were stewards of such things had placed into it  
Cooked-meat, bread and wine of the kind that noble Chieftains consume,  
Telemachus proceeded into that very fine chariot.  
Then Peisistratus, son of Nestor and among the best of men, embarked beside him,  
Took the reins, whipped up the horses  
And drove them away. Thus - without any desire not to - they sallied forth  
Across that plain near Pylos to leave behind them that lofty citadel.  
And, during the whole of that day, that harness shook as they kept the horses in it.  
  
Then, as the sun set and all the pathways became shadowy,  
They arrived at Pherae where was the dwelling of Diocles,  
Son of Ortilochus who himself was the son of Alpheus.  
There, they were welcomed as guests; and there they slept that night.  
And when the red-fingers of that early-rising Bringer of Warmth appeared,  
They harnessed their horses to that splendid chariot, embarked upon it,  
And - having driven past the forecourt and through the lofty porch -  
They whipped up the horses and drove away. Thus - without any desire not to -  
They sallied forth until they reached a wheat-producing plain  
Where they hastened on so as to complete their journey  
With the horses then swiftly bearing them along  
Until, with the setting of the sun, all the pathways became shadowy.



**Sappho**

**Poetic Fragments**

**Translated by DW Myatt**

**Prefatory Note**

The aim of the present translation is to try and present something of the unadorned beauty of Sappho's Greek.

From the many fragments that remain of her poetry, I have chosen those that in my fallible opinion best reflect something of this beauty. The text used is that of Lobel and Page [ *Poetarium Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, Oxford 1955 ] - and the numbering of the Fragments in this present work follows that of their text.

.... in the text indicates a break in the fragment; [ ] indicates a conjecture.

DW Myatt  
1986

---

### **Fragment 1**

Deathless Aphrodite – Daughter of Zeus and maker of snares –  
On your florid throne, hear me!  
My lady, do not subdue my heart by anguish and pain  
But come to me as when before  
You heard my distant cry, and listened:  
Leaving, with your golden chariot yoked, your father's house  
To move beautiful sparrows swift with a whirling of wings  
As from heaven you came to this dark earth through middle air  
And so swiftly arrived.

Then you my goddess with your immortal lips smiling  
Would ask what now afflicts me, why again  
I am calling and what now I with my restive heart  
Desired:

Whom now shall I beguile  
To bring you to her love?  
Who now injures you, Sappho?  
For if she flees, soon shall she chase  
And, rejecting gifts, soon shall she give.  
If she does not love you, she shall do so soon  
Whatsoever is her will.

Come to me now to end this consuming pain  
Bringing what my heart desires to be brought:  
Be yourself my ally in this fight.

### **Fragment 16**

For some – it is horsemen; for others – it is infantry;  
For some others – it is ships which are, on this black earth,  
Visibly constant in their beauty. But for me,  
It is that which you desire.

To all, it is easy to make this completely understood  
For Helen – she who greatly surpassed other mortals in beauty –  
Left her most noble man and sailed forth to Troy  
Forgetting her beloved parents and her daughter  
Because [ the goddess ] led her away ....

Which makes me to see again Anactoria now far distant:  
For I would rather behold her pleasing, graceful movement  
And the radiant splendour of her face

Than your Lydian chariots and foot-soldiers in full armour ....

**Fragment 22**

Gather your [ lyre ] and sing for me  
[ Soon ]  
As desire once again [ enhances ] your beauty:

Your dress excites, and I rejoice  
For I once doubted Aphrodite  
But now have asked that soon  
You will be with me again ....

**Fragment 31**

I see he who sits near you as an equal of the gods  
For he can closely listen to your delightful voice  
And that seductive laugh  
That makes the heart behind my breasts to tremble.

Even when I glimpse you for a moment  
My tongue is stilled as speech deserts me  
While a delicate fire is beneath my skin -  
My eyes cannot see, then,  
When I hear only a whirling sound  
As I shivering, sweat  
Because all of me trembles;  
I become paler than drought-grass  
And nearer to death ...

**Fragment 34**

Awed by her brightness  
Stars near the beautiful moon  
Cover their own shining faces  
When she lights earth  
With her silver brilliance  
Of love ....

**Fragment 23**

When I look at you  
I know that even Hermione  
Was not such as you -  
Fairer to compare you to Helen  
The golden-haired ....

**Fragment 41**

Beautiful girls, towards you  
My thoughts will never change ....

**Fragment 47**

Love shook my heart  
Like the mountain wind  
Falls upon trees of oak ....

**Fragment 94**

I can reveal to you that I wished to die –  
For with much weeping she left me  
Saying: “Sappho – what suffering is ours!  
For it is against my will that I leave you.”  
In answer, I said: “Go, happily remembering me  
For you know what we shared and pursued –  
If not, I wish you to see again our [ former joys ] .....  
The many braids of rose and violet you [ wreathed ]  
Around yourself at my side  
And the many garlands of flowers  
With which you adorned your soft neck:  
With royal oils from [ fresh flowers ]  
You anointed [ yourself ]  
And on soft beds fulfilled your longing  
[ For me ] ....

**Fragment 96**

She honoured you like a goddess  
And delighted in your choral dance.  
Now she is pre-eminent among the ladies of Lydia  
As the rose-rayed moon after the sinking of the Sun  
Surpasses all the stars and spreads it's light upon the sea  
And the flowers of the fields  
To beautify the spreading dew, freshen roses  
Soft chervil and the flowering melilot .....

Restless, she remembers gentle Atthis –  
Perhaps her subtle judgement is burdened



By your [ fate ] .....

For us, it is not easy to approach  
Goddesses in the beauty of their form  
But you ....

**Fragment 58**

Age seizes my skin and turns my hair  
From black to white:  
My knees no longer bear me  
And I am unable to dance again  
Like a fawn.

What could I do? I am not ageless:  
My youth is gone.  
Red-robed Dawn, immortal goddess,  
Carried [ Tithonus ] to earth's end  
Yet age seized him  
Despite the gift from his immortal lover ....

I love delicate softness:  
For me, love has brought the brightness  
And the beauty of the sun ....

**Fragment 126**

May you sleep on the breasts  
Of your tender companion ....

**Fragment 130**

Once again, desire -  
That looser of limbs and bitterly sweet -  
Makes me to tremble  
You are irresistible ....

**Fragment 138/147**

Believe me, in the future someone  
Will remember us .....

Because you love me  
Stand with me face to face  
And unveil the softness in your eyes .....

---

cc David Wulstan Myatt 1986, 2017

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) License  
and can be copied, distributed, and commercially published,  
according to the terms of that license.

Image credit:

Sappho, depicted on Attic red-figure kalathos, c. 470 BCE.  
Provenance: Akragas (Sicily) and currently in Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich

---



## **Heracclitus**

### **Some Translations and Notes**

#### **Contents**

- Translations of Some Fragments Attributed to Heracclitus
- The Poetry of Heracclitus - Notes on Fragment B1
- Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heracclitus B80
- Notes on Heracclitus Fragment 112
- Notes on Heracclitus Fragment 123
- Notes on Heracclitus Fragment 53
- The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic
- The Principle of Δίκη

---

### **Translations of Some Fragments Attributed to Heracclitus**

#### **Preface**

As explained in the notes that accompanied the translations, I have deliberately transliterated

(instead of translated) πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη - because both πόλεμος and δίκη should be regarded like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation, something especially true, in my opinion, regarding δίκη. To render such Greek terms blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical. δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary/ancestral way, and so on.

The notes to the translations are included below.

David Myatt  
2012  
(Revised February 2013)

---

## Fragment 1

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ  
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ  
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ  
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν  
διαίρεων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅπως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους  
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες  
ἐπιλανθάνονται

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done.

## Fragment 36

ψυχῇσιν θάνατος ὕδωρ γενέσθαι, ὕδατι δὲ θάνατος γῆν γενέσθαι, ἐκ  
γῆς δὲ ὕδωρ γίνεται, ἐξ ὕδατος δὲ ψυχῇ.

Where the water begins our living ends and where earth begins water ends, and yet earth nurtures water and from that water, Life.

### Fragment 39

*ἐν Πριήνῃ Βίας ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω, οὗ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν ἄλλων*

In Priene was born someone named and recalled as most worthy –  
Bias, that son of Teutamas

### Fragment 43

*ὑβριν χρὴ σβεννύναι μᾶλλον ἢ πυρκαϊήν*

Better to deal with your hubris before you confront that fire

### Fragment 52

*αἰὼν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων πεσσεύων· παιδὸς ἡ βασιληίη*

For Aeon, we are a game, pieces moved on some board: since, in this world of ours, we are but children.

### Fragment 53

*Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.*

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

### Fragment 64

*τὰ δὲ πάντα οἰακίζει Κεραυνός*

All beings are guided by Lightning

### Fragment 80

*εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]*

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord *δίκη*, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

### Fragment 112

*σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας*

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

### Fragment 123

*Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ*

Concealment accompanies Physis

### From Diogenes Laërtius - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*

*πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 7)*

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia

*Note:* I have used here a transliteration of the compound Greek word *ἐναντιοδρομίας* rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of

expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest. Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the individual. For further details, refer to my essay *The Change of Enantiodromia*.

---

---

## **The Poetry of Heraclitus**

### **Some Notes on Fragment 1**

#### **Text**

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ  
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ  
πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν ἐοίκασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ  
ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν  
διαίρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους  
λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες  
ἐπιλανθάνονται

#### **Translation**

My translation of the fragment is:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done.

#### **Comments**

1. λόγος

In respect of fragments 80 and 112 I have suggested that it is incorrect to interpret πόλεμος simplistically as 'war', strife, or *kampf*<sup>[1]</sup> and that, instead of using such words, it should be transliterated so as to name a distinct philosophical principle that requires interpretation and explanation with particular reference to Hellenic culture and philosophy. For, more often than not, such common English words as 'war' are now understood in a non-Hellenic, non-philosophical, context and explained in relation to some ideated opposite; and in the particular case of the term 'war', for example, in contrast to some-thing named, explained, or defined, as 'peace' or a state of non-belligerence.

In respect of fragment 1<sup>[2]</sup>, does λόγος suggest a philosophical principle and therefore should it, like πόλεμος, be transliterated and thus be considered as a basic principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or *weltanschauung*, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess? Or does λόγος, as I suggested in respect of fragment 112 and 123<sup>[3]</sup> imply:

both a *naming* (denoting), and a *telling* – not a telling as in some abstract explanation or theory, but as in a simple describing, or recounting, of what has been so denoted or so named. Which is why, in fragment 39, Heraclitus writes:

ἐν Πριήνῃ Βίᾳς ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω, οὗ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν  
ἄλλων<sup>[4]</sup>

and why, in respect of λέγειν, Hesiod wrote:

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,  
ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι<sup>[5]</sup>

I contend that fragment 1 also suggests a denoting, in the sense of expressing some-thing by denoting it or describing it by a 'name'. That is, that λόγος here does not refer here to what has often be termed Logos, and that the 'ambiguous' ἀεὶ<sup>[6]</sup> is not really ambiguous at all.

For one has to, in my view, take account of the fact that there is poetry in Heraclitus; a rather underrated style that sometimes led others to incorrectly describe him as ὁ σκοτεινός, the ambiguous (or the obtuse) one, and led Aristotle to write:

τὰ γὰρ Ἡρακλείτου διαστίζαι ἔργον διὰ τὸ ἄδηλον  
εἶναι ποτέρῳ πρόσκειται, τῷ ὕστερον ἢ τῷ πρότερον, οἷον ἐν τῇ ἀρχῇ



αὐτῇ τοῦ συγγράμματος:

φησὶ γὰρ "τοῦ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος ἀεὶ ἀξύνετοι ἄνθρωποι γίνονται":  
ἄδηλον γὰρ τὸ ἀεὶ, πρὸς ποτέρῳ δεῖ διαστίξαι. [6]

It is the poetic style of Heraclitus that I have tried, however badly, to express in my often non-literal and rather idiosyncratic translations/interpretations of some of the fragments attributed to him. Hence my interpretation of the first part:

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists – human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it.

The 'which I explain' being implicit in the sense of λόγος here as a naming and expression by a particular individual, contrasted (as often with Heraclitus) rather poetically with a generality; in this instance, contrasted with human beings - 'men' - in general.

## 2. ἀεὶ

In my view, "tend to" captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves.

## 3. διαιρέων and Φύσις

I take the sense of διαιρέων here somewhat poetically to suggest not the ordinary 'divide' but the more expressive 'cleave', with it being undivided Physis that is cleaved into parts by "such naming and expression" as Heraclitus has revealed. That is, Heraclitus is not saying that he has described or expressed each thing 'in accordance with its true nature' (or divided things correctly, or something of the kind) but rather that the process of naming and categorization is or has divided Physis, obscuring the true nature of Being and beings, and it is this process, this obscuring, or concealment. of Physis - of cleaving it into separate parts or each thing, 'each' contrasted with a generality <sup>[7]</sup> - that he has revealed and is mentioning here, as he mentioned it in fragment 123:

Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

Concealment accompanies Physis <sup>[8]</sup>

Which is why I have transliterated Φύσις as referring to a general philosophical principle of the philosophy of Heraclitus, or at least of what, of that philosophy or weltanschauung, we can adduce from the textual fragments we possess.

4. πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων

In respect of ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, the Homeric usage <sup>[9]</sup> is, for me, interesting as it implies a proverbial kind of saying rather than just 'words' and 'deeds':

Τηλέμαχ', οὐδ' ὄπιθεν κακὸς ἔσσει οὐδ' ἀνοήμων,  
εἰ δὴ τοι σοῦ πατρὸς ἐνέστακται μένος ἡύ,  
οἷος κεῖνος ἔην τελέσαι ἔργον τε ἔπος τε:

Telemachus - you will not be unlucky nor lacking in resolution  
If you hereafter instill into yourself the determination of your father  
Whose nature was to accomplish those deeds he said he would.

Furthermore, I take the sense here of πειρώμενοι poetically to suggest a "fumbling about" - as the inexperienced often fumble about and experiment until, often by trial and error, they have gained sufficient experience to understand and know what they are doing and what is involved, which rather reminds one of a saying of Pindar <sup>[10]</sup>:

γλυκὺ δὲ πόλεμος ἀπείροισιν, ἐμπείρων δέ τις  
ταρβεῖ προσιόντα νιν καρδίᾳ περισσῶ

5. ἐγερθέντες and εὔδοντες

Given that, as mentioned above, there is poetry in Heraclitus, I am inclined to avoid the literal, and usual, understanding of ἐγερθέντες and εὔδοντες, particularly given the foregoing πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων which renders such a literal understanding not only out of context and disjointed but decidedly odd. Human beings forgetting things when they sleep? If, however, and for example, ἐγείρω here poetically suggests alertness,

an interest or excitement - as ἡγείρεν in the Agamemnon suggests an alertness and excitement, an interest in what has occurred, and thence the kindling of a pyre<sup>[11]</sup> - then there is, as often in Heraclitus, a flowing eloquence and that lack of discordance one might expect of an aphorism remembered and recorded long after the demise of its author.

David Myatt  
February 2013

### *Notes*

[1] qv. *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*, and *Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80*

As mentioned in *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*:

"In addition, Polemos was originally the δαίμων [not the god] of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect."

[2] qv. Sextus Empiricus: *Advenus Mathematicos* VII. 132

[3] Regarding 123 - Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ - qv. *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*, e-text 2010

[4] "In Priene was born someone named and recalled as most worthy - Bias, that son of Teutamas."

[5]

We have many ways to conceal - to name - certain things  
And the skill when we wish to expose their meaning

[6] Aristotle: *Ars Rhetorica* Book 3, chapter 5 [1407b]

[7] As in Homer et al, for example Iliad, Book VII, 215 -

Τρῶας δὲ τρόμος αἶνός ὑπήλυθε γυῖα ἕκαστον

But over the Trojans, a strange fear, to shake the limbs of each one there

[8] qv. my *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change* [Notes on Heraclitus fragment 123], e-text 2010

[9] Odyssey, Book II, 272

[10] Fragment 110

[11] Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 296-299

σθένουσα λαμπὰς δ' οὐδέπω μαυρουμένη,  
ὑπερθοροῦσα πεδίον Ἀσωποῦ, δίκην  
φαιδρᾶς σελήνης, πρὸς Κιθαιρῶνος λέπας  
ἤγειρεν ἄλλην ἐκδοχὴν πομποῦ πυρός.

The torch, vigorous and far from extinguished,  
Bounded over the Asopian plain  
To the rocks of Cithaeron as bright as the moon  
So that the one waiting there to begin that fire, jumped up

Note that here the watchman is not awakened from sleep.

---

### ***Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80***

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα  
πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]. Fragmentum 80.

This fragment, attributed to Heraclitus, is generally considered to mean

something rather abstract such as: war is everywhere and strife is justice and all that is arises and passes away because of strife.

That is, πόλεμος is regarded as a synonym for either kampf, or more generally, for war. However, I incline toward the view that this older understanding of - the accepted rendition of - πόλεμος is a misinterpretation, and that rather than kampf (struggle), or a general type of strife, or what we now associate with the term war, πόλεμος implies what I have elsewhere termed the acausality (a simultaneity) [1] beyond our causal ideation, and which ideation has separated object from subject, and often abstracted them into seemingly conflicting opposites [2]. Hence my particular interpretation of Fragmentum 53:

*Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν  
θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ  
ἐλευθέρους.*

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

Hence my interpretation of Fragment 80 - εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα  
ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών] -  
as:

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [3]

Here, I have deliberately transliterated (instead of translated) πόλεμος, and left δίκη as δίκη - because both πόλεμος and δίκη (written Πόλεμος and, I suggest, Δίκη) should be regarded, like ψυχή (psyche/Psyche) as terms or as principles in their own right (hence the capitalization), and thus imply, suggest, and require, interpretation and explanation, something especially true, in my opinion, regarding Δίκη. To render them blandly by English terms such as 'war' and 'justice' - which have their own now particular meaning(s) - is in my view erroneous and somewhat lackadaisical. δίκη for instance could be, depending on context: the custom(s) of a folk, judgement (or Judgement personified), the natural and the necessary balance, the correct/customary /ancestral way, and so on.

In respect of Δίκη, I write it thus to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond

and what was the genesis of *δίκη* personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, *Δίκη* implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning - *σωφρονεῖν* - that *πάθει μάθος* brings and restores, and which accumulated *πάθει μάθος* of a particular folk or *πόλις* forms the basis for their ancestral customs. *δίκη* is therefore, as the numinous principle *Δίκη*, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between *ἀρετή* and *ὑβρις* - between the *ὑβρις* that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for *ἀρετή* becomes unbalanced and excessive.

That is, when *ἔρις* (discord) is or becomes *δίκη* - as suggested by Heraclitus in Fragment 80.

In respect of *Πόλεμος*, it is perhaps interesting that in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) married a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) [4] and that it was a common folk belief that *πόλεμος* accompanied *ὑβρις* - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing *ἔρις*.

As a result of *ἔρις*, there often arises *πάθει μάθος* - that practical and personal knowing, that reasoned understanding which, according to Aeschylus [5] is the new law, the new understanding, given by Zeus to replace the older more religious and dogmatic way of fear and dread, often viewed as *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* [6]. A new understanding which Aeschylus sought to explain in the *Oresteia*.

Therefore one can perhaps understand and appreciate the true and acausal nature of *Πόλεμος* which, as suggested by Fragment 53, is a natural principle (or 'energy' or a manifestation of Being) which affects, or governs, all mortals and which, as suggested by Fragment 80, causes the manifestation of beings from Being (the causal separation of beings) and which natural separation results in *ἔρις* and thence, as suggested by Fragment 123 [7] a return to Being; a return which can result, as suggested by Fragment 112 [8] arise from thoughtful reasoning [*σωφρονεῖν*] - and which thoughtful, balanced, reasoning can incline us toward not committing *ὑβρις*.

## Notes

[1] For the axiom of acausality, see my *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*.

[2] For an outline of opposites, refer to my essay *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*.

[3] Some alternative renderings of this fragment are:

One should be aware that polemos is pervasive; and discord *δίκη*, and that beings [our being] quite naturally come-into-being through discord

One should be aware that polemos pervades; with discord *δίκη*, and that all beings are begotten because of discord.

[4] A *δαίμων* is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - *θεοί* - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the *δαίμων* of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's *πόλις* (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is doubly incorrect.

[5] Agamemnon, 174-183. qv. my essay, *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way - The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος*

[6] Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6

[7] *Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ* - *Concealment accompanies Physis*. See my *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*.

[8] *σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μεγίστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας*

For this fragment, see my essay *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθέα in Heraclitus*.

---

## The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθέα in Heraclitus

### Part One - Fragment 112

σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴ μέγιστη, καὶ σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας. <sup>[1]</sup>

Most excellent is balanced reasoning, for that skill can tell inner character from outer.

This fragment is interesting because it contains what some regard as the philosophically important words *σωφρονεῖν*, *ἀληθέα*, *φύσις* and *λόγος*.

The fragment suggests that what is most excellent [ *ἀρετὴ* ] is thoughtful reasoning [ *σωφρονεῖν* ] – and such reasoning is both (1) to express (reveal) meaning and (2) that which is in accord with, or in sympathy with, *φύσις* – with our nature and the nature of Being itself.

Or, we might, perhaps more aptly, write – such reasoning is both an expressing of inner meaning (essence), and expresses our own, true, nature (as thinking beings) and the balance, the nature, of Being itself.

*λέγειν* [ *λόγος* ] here does not suggest what we now commonly understand by the term 'word'. Rather, it suggests both a *naming* (denoting), and a *telling* – not a telling as in some abstract explanation or theory, but as in a simple describing, or recounting, of what has been so denoted or so named. Which is why, in fragment 39, Heraclitus writes:

ἐν Πριήνῃ Βίας ἐγένετο ὁ Τευτάμεω, οὗ πλείων λόγος ἢ τῶν ἄλλων  
<sup>[2]</sup>

and why, in respect of *λέγειν*, Hesiod [see below under *ἀληθέα*] wrote:

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,  
ἴδμεν δ' , εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι <sup>[3]</sup>

*φύσις* here suggests the Homeric <sup>[4]</sup> usage of nature, or character, as in Herodotus (2.5.2):



Αἰγύπτου γὰρ φύσις ἐστὶ τῆς χώρης τοιήδε

but also suggests Φύσις (Physis) – as in fragment 123; the natural nature of all beings, beyond their outer appearance.

ἀληθέα – commonly translated as truth – here suggests (as often elsewhere) an exposure of *essence*, of the reality, the meaning, which lies behind the outer (false) appearance that covers or may conceal that reality or meaning, as in Hesiod (*Theog*, 27-28):

ἴδμεν ψεύδεα πολλὰ λέγειν ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα,  
ἴδμεν δ', εὖτ' ἐθέλωμεν, ἀληθέα γηρύσασθαι <sup>[3]</sup>

σωφρονεῖν here suggests balanced (or thoughtful, measured) reasoning – but not according to some abstract theory, but instead a reasoning, a natural way or manner of reasoning, in natural balance with ourselves, with our nature as thinking beings.

Most importantly, perhaps, it is this σωφρονεῖν which can incline us toward not committing ὕβρις (hubris; insolence), which ὕβρις is a going beyond the natural limits, and which thus upsets the natural balance, as, for instance, mentioned by Sophocles:

ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον:  
ὕβρις, εἰ πολλῶν ὑπερπλησθῇ μάταν,  
ἂ μὴ 'πίκαιρα μηδὲ συμφέροντα,  
ἀκρότατον εἰσαναβᾶσ'  
αἶψος ἀπότομον ὥρουσεν εἰς ἀνάγκαν,  
ἔνθ' οὐ ποδὶ χρησίμῳ  
χρῆται <sup>[5]</sup>

It therefore not surprising that Heraclitus considers, as expressed in fragment 112, the best person – the person with the most excellent character (that is, ἀρετῇ) – is the person who, understanding and appreciating their own true nature as a thinking being (someone who can give names to – who can denote – beings, and express or recount that denoting to others), also understands the balance of Being, the true nature of beings [cf. fragment 1 - κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον], and who thus seeks to avoid committing the error of hubris, but who can not only also forget this understanding, and cease to remember such reasoning:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ  
πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον <sup>[6]</sup>

but who can also deliberately, or otherwise, conceal what lies behind the names (the outer appearance) we give to beings, to 'things'.

DW Myatt  
2455369.713

*Notes:*

[1] Fragmentum B 112 - *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, ed. H. Diels, Berlin 1903

[2] "In Priene was born someone named and recalled as most worthy - Bias, that son of Teutamias."

[3]

We have many ways to conceal - to name - certain things  
And the skill when we wish to expose their meaning

[4] *Odyssey*, Book 10, vv. 302-3

[5] "Insolence plants the tyrant. There is insolence if by a great foolishness there is a useless over-filling which goes beyond the proper limits. It is an ascending to the steepest and utmost heights and then that hurtling toward that Destiny where the useful foot has no use..." (Oedipus Tyrannus, vv.872ff)

[6] "Although this naming and expression, which I explain, exists - human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it." (Fragment 1)

---

*Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ*  
***Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change***

The phrase *Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ* - attributed to Heraclitus [See Note 1] - is often translated along the following lines: Nature loves to conceal Herself (or, Nature loves to hide).

Such a translation is somewhat inaccurate, for several reasons.

First, as used here, by Heraclitus, the meaning of *Φύσις* is rather different from his other usage of the term, as such usage is known to us in other fragments of his writings. For the sense here is of *Φύσις* rather than *φύσις* – a subtle distinction that is often overlooked; that is, what is implied is that which is the origin behind the other senses, or usages, of the term *φύσις*.

Thus, *Φύσις* (Physis) is not simply what we understand as Nature; rather, Nature is one way in which *Φύσις* is manifest, presented, to us: to we human beings who possess the faculty of consciousness and of reflexion (Thought). That is, what we term Nature [See Note 2] has the being, the attribute, of Physis.

As generally used – for example, by Homer – *φύσις* suggests the character, or nature, of a thing, especially a human being; a sense well-kept in English, where Nature and nature can mean two different things (hence one reason to capitalize Nature). Thus, we might write that Nature has the nature of Physis.

Second, *κρύπτεσθαι* does not suggest a simple concealment, some intent to conceal – as if Nature was some conscious (or anthropomorphic) thing with the ability to conceal Herself. Instead, *κρύπτεσθαι* implies a natural tendency to, the innate quality of, being – and of becoming – concealed or un-revealed.

Thus – and in reference to fragments 1 and 112 – we can understand that *κρύπτεσθαι* suggests that *φύσις* has a natural tendency (the nature, the character) of being and of becoming un-revealed to us, even when it has already been revealed, or dis-covered.

How is or can *Φύσις* (Physis) be uncovered? Through *λόγος* (cf. fragments 1, and 112).

Here, however, *logos* is more than some idealized (or moralistic) *truth* [ *ἀληθέα* ] and more than is implied by our term *word*. Rather, *logos* is the activity, the seeking, of the essence – the nature, the character – of things [ *ἀληθέα* akin to Heidegger's revealing] which essence also has a tendency to become covered by words, and an abstract (false) truth [ an abstraction; *εἶδος* and *ἰδέα* ] which is projected by us onto things, onto beings and Being.

Thus, and importantly, *λόγος* – understood and applied correctly – can uncover (reveal) *Φύσις* and yet also – misunderstood and used incorrectly – serve to, or be the genesis of the, concealment of *Φύσις*. The correct *logos* – or a correct *logos* – is the ontology of Being, and the *λόγος* that is logical reasoning is an essential part of, a necessary foundation of, this ontology of Being, this seeking by *φίλος*, a friend, of *σοφόν*. Hence, and correctly, a philosopher is a friend of

σοφόν who seeks, through λόγος, to uncover – to understand – Being and beings, and who thus suggests or proposes an ontology of Being.

Essentially, the nature of Physis is to be concealed, or hidden (something of a mystery) even though Physis becomes revealed, or can become revealed, by means such as λόγος. There is, thus, a natural change, a natural unfolding – of which Nature is one manifestation – so that one might suggest that Physis itself is this process [ the type of being] of a natural unfolding which can be revealed and which can also be, or sometimes remain, concealed.

Third, φιλεῖ [ φίλος ] here does not suggest “loves” – nor even a *desire* to – but rather suggests *friend*, companion, as in Homeric usage.

In conclusion, therefore, it is possible to suggest more accurate translations of the phrase Φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ. All of which correctly leave Φύσις untranslated (as Physis with a capital P), since Φύσις is the source of certain beings [or, to be precise, Physis is the source of, the being behind, our apprehension of certain beings] of which being Nature is one, and of which our own, individual, character, as a particular human being, is another.

One translation is: *Concealment accompanies Physis*. Or: Concealment remains with Physis, like a friend. Another is: The natural companion of Physis is concealment.

Or, more poetically perhaps, but much less literally, one might suggest: *Physis naturally seeks to remain something of a mystery*.

DW Myatt  
2010

*Notes:*

[1] Fragmentum B 123 – *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* ed. H. Diels, Berlin 1903. If the first letter of φύσις is not capitalized, then the phrase is φύσις κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ

Heraclitus flourished c. 545 – 475 BCE.

[2] Nature can be said to be both a type of being, and that innate, creative, force (that is, ψυχή) which animates physical matter and makes it living.

*Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.* Heraclitus, Fragmentum 53.

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

As for *Πόλεμος* - while Heidegger suggested a similarity with *λόγος*, *Πόλεμος* is in my view what the *λόγος* that is both causal and acausal knowing can uncover, rather than *λόγος* itself. That is, the *ἀρχή* of, the changing, the presencing and re-presencing of Being which is *ψυχή* through *Αἰών*. Hence *Πόλεμος* is the whole, the complete, the natural, the cosmological, process which includes *ἀρχή*, *ψυχή*, *Αἰών*, and *Φύσις*, and our revealing or coming-to-know these through *λόγος*. That is, through that thoughtful reasoning [*σωφρονεῖν*], that balance (*ἁρμονίη*) of both a causal knowing and an acausal knowing. In other words, by means of both empathy, and also by philosophy and experimental science. In effect, *Πόλεμος* is an expresion of the acausality beyond our causal ideation, the acausal nature of which both *ψυχή* and *Αἰών* manifest [1].

It should be stressed that, correctly understand, *Πόλεμος* is, in my opinion, neither the struggle (*Kampf*) of Heidegger nor the common translation of war. Rather it suggests - as above - the fundamental acausality beyond *Phainómenon*: the presencing of Being as Change, and thus as beings, that has been interpreted, incorrectly because via causal ideation only, as a dialectic and thus as a conflict, or as conflict as idea. Neither is *Πόλεμος* the practical combat as in the *Iliad* (XVIII, 106) - contrasted with *ἔρις* in the next verse [2], as it is so contrasted in Fragment 80, attributed to Heraclitus.

As such acausality, made manifest via *ψυχή*, *Πόλεμος* may be said to be the origin of *Δίκη* [3] in a similar way to Aeschylus attributing the numinous authority of *πάθει μάθος* to Zeus [4].

Thus, our own nature as mortals is that we are part of this acausal change - we have our genesis (both our life, and our type of living) in this change, in and through and because of *Πόλεμος*.

David Myatt  
2011 CE

[1] See, for example, my essays, *On The Nature of Abstraction*, and *Empathy and the Immoral Abstraction of Race*.

[2] οἷος ἐὼν οἷος οὐ τις Ἀχαιῶν χαλκοχιτώνων  
ἐν πολέμῳ: ἀγορῇ δέ τ' ἀμείνονές εἰσι καὶ ἄλλοι.  
ὥς ἔρις ἔκ τε θεῶν ἔκ τ' ἀνθρώπων ἀπόλοιτο  
καὶ χόλος

[3] For a brief overview of Δίκη, see my essay, *On The Nature of Abstraction*.

[4] Refer, for example, to my *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way*.

---

## The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic

I - Opposites and Dialectic as Abstractions

II - The Error of Polemos as Kampf

III - Being and Empathy

### I - Opposites and Dialectic as Abstractions

For well over a hundred years there has been a belief that some kind of process, or dialectic, between or involving certain, particular, opposites might lead us to answer questions such as *Quid est Veritas?*, could lead to a certain understanding of ourselves, and may well express something of the true nature of reality, of Being itself. In varying degrees this belief is evident, for instance, in Hegel, Nietzsche (with his *Wille zur macht*), Marx, and those espousing the doctrine that has been termed Social Darwinism.

In addition, and for a much greater span of causal Time, this belief has been an essential part of certain religions where the process is often expressed eschatologically and in a conjectured conflict between the abstract opposites of 'good' and 'evil', God and Devil, and such things as demons and angels.

This notion of opposites, of two distinct, separate, things is much in evidence

in Plato, and indeed, philosophically, the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites may be said to have begun with Plato. For instance, he contrasts πόλεμος with στάσις (Conflict/strife contrasted with stasis/stability) thus:

ἐπὶ μὲν οὖν τῇ τοῦ οἰκείου ἔχθρᾳ στάσις κέκληται, ἐπὶ δὲ τῇ τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου πόλεμος. Rep. V 470b

In respect of these two forms, Plato tries to explain that while there are two terms, two distinct namings - πόλεμος and στάσις - what are so denoted are not just two different names but express what he regards as the reality - the being, οὐσία - of two differing contrasted beings; that is, he posits what we would call two different ideations, or abstractions, creating an abstract (idealized) form for one and an abstract (idealized) form for the other.

Some centuries later, Diogenes Laërtius - apparently paraphrasing Heraclitus - wrote in his *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*:

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (ix. 9)

All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia [1].

Which might seem to suggest that a certain mis-understanding of Heraclitus [2], the ideation of Plato and of later philosophers and theologians, was the genesis of abstractions and of this belief that a so-called conflict of opposites can lead to 'truth', and explain the nature of Being and beings.

However, this ideation, this development of abstractions, and this process of a dialectic, led to the philosophical error of the separation of beings from Being so that instead of the revealing that would answer *Quid est Veritas?* there is ὕβρις with the numinous authority of an individual πάθει μάθος replaced by adherence to some dogmatic dialectical process involving some assumed struggle/conflict. That is, by considering ἀρχή as the cause of the abstractions which are opposites and the origin of a dialectic, and which opposites, and which dialectic involving them, are said to manifest the nature of both our being and of Being itself.

This is an error because Πόλεμος is neither kampf nor conflict, but rather - as the quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests - what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being which, though we have

have a natural tendency to separate into portions (that is, to perceive beings as only beings), beings themselves become revealed as bound together again by us facing up to the expected contest: that is, to our human nature and to knowing, to developing, to using, our faculty of reasoned judgement - *σωφρονεῖν* - to uncover, to reveal, via *λόγος*, the true nature of *Δίκη* and thus restore *ἀρμονίη* [3].

That is, instead of this abstraction of a dialectic there is, as I have suggested elsewhere:

A natural process of Change, of *ἀρχή* which we apprehend as *Φύσις* - as Heraclitus expressed in fragment 112:

*σωφρονεῖν ἀρετὴν μεγίστην, καὶ σοφίην ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας.*

This suggests that what is most excellent [ *ἀρετὴ* ] is thoughtful reasoning [ *σωφρονεῖν* ] - and that such thoughtful reasoning is a process which not only expresses and uncovers meaning, but which is also in accord with, in harmony or in sympathy with, *φύσις* - that is, with our own nature as mortals and with the nature of Being itself. [4]

## II - The Error of Polemos as Kampf

In a fragment attributed to Heraclitus [5] *Πόλεμος* is generally regarded as a synonym for either *kampf*, or more generally, for war; with the fragment then considered to mean something such as: strife (or war) is the father of everything. This interpretation is said to compliment another fragment attributed to Heraclitus:

*εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών].* Fragmentum 80.

This is generally considered to mean something abstract such as: war is everywhere and strife is justice and all that is arises and passes away because of strife.

However, I contend that this older understanding of - the accepted rendition of - *Πόλεμος* is a misinterpretation of *Πόλεμος* [6], and that rather than *kampf*



(struggle), or a general type of strife, or what we now associate with the term war, *Πόλεμος* implies the acausality (a simultaneity) beyond our causal ideation, and which ideation has separated object from subject, and often abstracted them into seemingly conflicting opposites. Hence my interpretation of Fragmentum 53:

*Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.*

Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.

Hence also my interpretation of *εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]* as:

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord *δίκη*, and that beings are naturally born by discord. [7]

Thus the suggestion is that *Πόλεμος* is not some abstract 'war' or strife or *kampf*, but not only that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, but also that which manifests as *δίκη* and accompanies *ἔρις* because it is the nature of *Πόλεμος* that beings, born because of and by *ἔρις*, can be returned to Being (become bound together - be whole - again).

For it is perhaps interesting that in the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, and in circulation at the time of Heraclitus, a personified *πόλεμος* (as the *δαίμων* of kindred strife) married a personified *ὑβρις* (as the *δαίμων* of arrogant pride) [8] and that it was a common folk belief that *πόλεμος* accompanied *ὑβρις* - that is, that Polemos followed Hubris around rather than vice versa, causing or bringing *ἔρις*.

As a result of *ἔρις*, there often arises *πάθει μάθος* - that practical and personal knowing, that reasoned understanding which, according to Aeschylus [9] is the new law, the new understanding, given by Zeus to replace the older more religious and dogmatic way of fear and dread, often viewed as *Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες* [10]. A new understanding which Aeschylus saught to explain in the *Oresteia*.

### III - Being and Empathy

This new understanding is basically the culture of ἀρετή:

This *culture of ἀρετή* is a particular balance - born from πάθει μάθος (from the personal knowing of the error, the unbalance, that is ὕβρις) and from using reasoned judgement (σωφρονεῖν), and both of which make us aware of the true nature of our φύσις and of Φύσις itself.  
[11]

In addition, by cultivating and by using our natural faculty of empathy, which is part of λόγος [12], we can understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings - and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being [13] and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation implicit on opposites and dialectic), is a covering-up of Being and of Πόλεμος and thus involves a mis-understanding of both Δίκαια and of φύσις.

In place of the numinosity of ψυχή - of Life qua being - there is, for the apprehension that is a dialectic of opposites, the hubris of abstractions, and thus a loss of our natural balance, a loss of ἀρμονίη [14] and συμπάθεια.

David Myatt  
April 2011 CE

### Notes

[1] I have used a transliteration of the compound Greek word - ἐναντιοδορομίας - rather than given a particular translation, since the term enantiodromia in my view suggests the uniqueness of expression of the original, and which original in my view is not adequately, and most certainly not accurately, described by a usual translation such as 'conflict of opposites'. Rather, what is suggested is 'confrontational contest' - that is, by facing up to the expected/planned/inevitable contest.

Interestingly, Carl Jung - who was familiar with the sayings of Heraclitus - used the term enantiodromia to describe the emergence of a trait (of character) to offset another trait and so restore a certain psychological balance within the

individual.

[2] Refer to my (a) *The Balance of Physis – Notes on λόγος and ἀληθέα in Heraclitus*; (b) *Heraclitus - Notes on Fragment 53*; (b) *Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80* (forthcoming); (c) *Physis, Nature, Concealment, and Natural Change*.

[3] While Φύσις (Physis) has a natural tendency to become covered up (Heraclitus, Fragment 123) it can be uncovered through λόγος and πάθει μάθος.

[4] In *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race*

[5]

*Πόλεμος πάντων μὲν πατήρ ἐστι, πάντων δὲ βασιλεύς, καὶ τοὺς μὲν θεοὺς ἔδειξε τοὺς δὲ ἀνθρώπους, τοὺς μὲν δούλους ἐποίησε τοὺς δὲ ἐλευθέρους.*  
Fragmentum 53.

[6] See my *Heraclitus - Notes on Fragment 53*, and my *Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80*.

In the former article, I suggest a new interpretation of Fragmentum 53:  
*Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound.*

[7] I have deliberately transliterated (instead of translated) polemos, and left δίκη as δίκη. In respect of δίκη, see my essay *Quid Est Veritas?*

Alternative renderings of the fragment are:

One should be aware that polemos is pervasive; and discord δίκη, and that beings [our being] quite naturally come-into-being through discord

One should be aware that polemos pervades; with discord δίκη, and that all beings are begotten because of discord.

[8] Correctly understood, a δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods - θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

In addition, Polemos was originally the δαίμων of kindred strife, whether familial, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of conflict (or war), is

doubly incorrect.

It is interesting to observe how the term *δαίμων* - with and after Plato, and especially by its (mis) use by the early Christian Church - came to be a moral abstraction, used in a bad sense (as 'demon'), and contrasted with another moral abstraction, that of 'angels'. Indeed, this process - this change - with this particular term is a reasonable metaphor for what we may call the manufacture and development of abstractions, and in which development the ontology and theology of an organized monotheistic religion played a not insignificant part.

[9] Agamemnon, 174-183. qv. my essay, *From Aeschylus To The Numinous Way - The Numinous Authority of πάθει μάθος*

[10] Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6

[11] Myatt, David: *Quid Est Veritas?* (2011)

[12] As mentioned in my *Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions*, *λόγος* is manifest to us in both empathy and reason.

[13] qv. *Some Notes Concerning Causality, Ethics, and Acausal Knowing*.

[14] "...the *numinous* is what predisposes us not to commit *ὑβρις* - that is, what continues or maintains or manifests *ἀρμονίη* and thus *καλλός*; the natural balance - *sans* abstractions - that enables us to know and appreciate, and which uncovers, *Φύσις* and *λόγος*, and *τὸ καλόν*." Pre-Socratic Philosophy, The Numinous Way, Aesthetics, and Other Questions

---

---

### The Principle of Δίκη

Δίκη is that noble, respectful, balance understood, for example, by Sophocles (among many others) - for instance, Antigone respects the natural balance, the customs and traditions of her own numinous culture, given by the gods, whereas Creon verges towards and finally commits, like Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannus*, the error of *ὑβρις* and is thus "taught a lesson" (just like Oedipus) by the gods because, as Aeschylus wrote [\[1\]](#) -

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσ-  
ιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει

In respect of Δίκη, I write - spell - it thus in this modern way with a capital Δ to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate it from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement - the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

Thus, Δίκη implies the balance, the reasoned judgement, the thoughtful reasoning - σωφρονεῖν - that πάθει μάθος brings and restores, and which accumulated πάθει μάθος of a particular folk or πόλις forms the basis for their ancestral customs. δίκη is therefore, as the numinous principle Δίκη, what may be said to be a particular and a necessary balance between ἀρετή and ὕβρις - between the ὕβρις that often results when the personal, the natural, quest for ἀρετή becomes unbalanced and excessive.

That is, when ἔρις (discord) is or becomes δίκη - as suggested by Heraclitus in Fragment 80 [2] -

εἰδέναι δὲ χρὴ τὸν πόλεμον ἔοντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα  
πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα [χρεών]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

David Myatt  
2011

### Notes

[1]

Δίκη δὲ τοῖς μὲν παθοῦσ-  
ιν μαθεῖν ἐπιρρέπει

The goddess, Judgement, favours someone *learning from adversity*.

*Aeschylus: Agamemnon, 250-251*

[2] Refer to my essay *Some Notes on Πόλεμος and Δίκη in Heraclitus B80*.

---

**cc David Myatt 2012**  
**Fifth Edition**



This work is covered by the Creative Commons (Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0) License and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

*Image credit:*

Attic Vase c. 480 BCE, depicting Athena (Antikensammlungen, Munich, Germany)

---

# One Perceivoration

## Contents

Preface.  
On Translating Ancient Greek.  
A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos.  
Appreciating Classical Literature.  
An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture.  
Concerning The Gospel Of John.  
On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision.  
Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum.  
Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos.  
Appendix I - The Concept Of Physis.  
Appendix II - Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture.  
Appendix III - On Ethos And Interpretation.

---

## Preface

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [1] and my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, [2] I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words.

Hopefully this collection will go some way toward revealing to readers the reasoning behind why I, for example, use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular philosophical meaning - "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is "soundness of mind, moderation", thus avoiding the English word "mind" with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise.

Another example is pathei mathos - πάθει μάθος - which is used not in accord with Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, but in accord with the English language use of an expression, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

A further example is σοφόν in preference to σοφός, when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and

what was/is the genesis of those denotata: which is the quiddity, the physis, with the denotata (σοφός: skill, learning, wisdom) a presencing [3] in an individual of that wordless quiddity, [4] that physis. [5]

In these and other instances the words are used in an Anglicized, non-inflective, way to suggest a specific philosophical term or concept different from what the original Greek does or might suggest, ancient or modern, as in the matter of σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη. That is, they are intended to be assimilated into the English language either in their transliterated form (for instance sophronein) or in their Greek form (for instance σωφρονεῖν) and refer not to some supra-personal "idea" or ideation - ἰδέα/εἶδος - or abstraction but rather to individuals.

I attempted to explain the philosophical principles behind my methodology and weltanschauung in my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, and in my two monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* [6] and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. [7] Which principles are (i) emphasising the individual, the personal, the unique and empathic nature of perceivance - of apprehending and understanding Being and beings, and our own physis - over and above abstractions and ideations and thus over and above denotata - and (ii) that the classical principles or virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθόν related to and were defined by the deeds, the lives, of individuals and not to something supra-personal such as some idea or ideation or dogma or faith or ideology, and were well-expressed in the term καλὸς κάγαθός, which implies those who conduct themselves in a certain manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - a particular personal character.

But as I noted in one of the essays included here: does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make my philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps.

However, in regard to translations such as tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, when I have used an original phrase - for example "quidditas of semblance" in the Pœmandres tractate, and, in the Gospel of John, translated οὐρανός as Empyrean rather than the conventional Heaven, to give just two examples from the many - I have explained my interpretation in the associated commentary.

For reasons which the essays included here may make clear, I have added a slightly revised version of my *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos: Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations*, and also the *Introduction* to my translation of and commentary on chapters I-V of the Gospel of John. [8]

David Myatt  
2020  
Second Edition

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017 ISBN 978-1976452369



[2] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. ISBN 978-1484096642

[3] Presencing: from the classical Latin praesentia - meaning "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or an individual. Qv. my commentary on ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia, of the Corpus Hermeticum.

[4] The scholastic term quiddity derives from the 11th/12th century post-classical Latin quidditas, and avoids using the term "essence" (οὐσία) which has post-classical and modern connotations. As I noted in my commentary on tractate XI:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α:

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγόμενη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὅλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

See also my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/aristotle-metaphysics-1015α/>

[5] In respect of physis, refer to Appendix I: The Concept Of Physis

[6] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. ISBN 978-1979599023

[7] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. 2017. ISBN 978-1982010935

[8] The translation of and commentary is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

---

### On Translating Ancient Greek

Given that I have numerous times over the past ten or so years been asked by various individuals (including Greek scholars) about my Greek translations, and given that it seems some of my translations (such as parts of the Corpus Hermeticum) are regarded as "iconoclastic and controversial", it seems

fitting to provide a rather more detailed explanation of my methodology over and above my few, short, previous remarks.

When studying New Testament Greek while a monk in a Christian monastery in the 1970s - and being already familiar (from schooldays and later studies including at that monastery) with Homer's Greek and the way that Aeschylus often omitted 'the article' and invented new words to express his meaning - I began to wonder, in respect of translations, about what I have since termed 'retrospective re-interpretation'. As I mentioned in my essay *Some Examples Regarding Translation and Questions of Interpretation*, included as an Appendix to my Poemandres translation and commentary:

"I incline toward the view that in translations into English it is often best to avoid words that impose or seem to impose a meaning on an ancient text especially if the sense that an English word now imputes is the result of centuries of assumptions or opinions or influences and thus has acquired a modern meaning, or an interpretation, somewhat at variance with the culture, the milieu, of the time when the text that is being translated was written. Especially so in the matter of religious or spiritual texts where so many people rely or seem to rely on the translations, the interpretations, of others and where certain interpretations seem to have become fixed.

Thus, it may be helpful if one can suggest, however controversial or iconoclastic they may seem in their time, reasoned alternatives for certain words important for a specific and a general understanding of a particular text, and helpful because such alternatives might enable a new appreciation of such a text, as if for instance one is reading it for the first time with the joy of discovery.

For example, one of the prevalent English words used in translations of the New Testament, and one of the words now commonly associated with revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam, is sin. A word which now imputes and for centuries has imputed a particular and at times somewhat strident if not harsh moral attitude, with sinners starkly contrasted with the righteous and the saved, and with sin, what is evil, what is perverse, to be shunned and shudderingly avoided."

I then proceeded to give various quotations and argued that the original sense of the English word 'sin' was "the sense of doing what was wrong, of committing an error, of making a mistake, of being at fault; at most of overstepping the bounds, of transgressing limits imposed by others, and thus being 'guilty' of such an infraction, a sense which the suggested etymology of the word *syn* implies: from the Latin *sons, sontis*." Hence why in translating John 8.7 I eschewed the much overused and now often pejorative word sin:

So, as they continued to ask [for an answer] he straightened himself, saying to them: Let he who has never made a mistake [Ἀναμαρτητός] throw the first stone at her.

ὥς δὲ ἐπέμενον ἐρωτῶντες αὐτόν, ἀνέκυψεν καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὁ ἀναμάρτητος ὑμῶν πρῶτος ἐπ' αὐτὴν βαλέτω λίθον.

While such a translation may well be controversial, to me it imparts something important regarding the teachings, and the life, of Jesus of Nazareth: something quite human, something rather different from a stern preacher preaching about 'sin'; something which to me seems to express what the Beatitudes express, and something which individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox and William Pen many centuries later tried to say and write about Christianity and about the teachings and the life of Jesus of Nazareth. This seeking after meaning beyond what a particular English word now often denoted - in common usage or otherwise - I applied to my translations of some fragments of Heraclitus, to my translations of three tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, and am applying to my on-going (as of 2016) translation of and commentary on the Gospel of John. I also used this principle, albeit then in a mostly intuitive way, when undertaking my translations, decades before, of Sophocles and Aeschylus.

Thus I sought to try and understand - to apprehend, both intuitively and by scholarly means - what the author was expressing or sought to express all those centuries ago; which necessitated understanding the milieu, the ethos, the culture, of the time and the place where the author lived. My approach was therefore more than strictly grammatical; more than lexicographical. Why is why, in the Hermetic tractates the translation of such words as ἀγαθός and εὐσεβέω and θεός were considered in the necessary context. [1]

What, for example, did θεός mean and imply in the Hellenic times that the texts were written? My view is that to translate as 'god' is to miss the variety of possible meanings, since 'god' to so many people in the West imparts the sense of, if not the God of Christianity, then of 'the one deity' of neo-pythagoreanism and gnosticism. This then leads and has led to speculation as whether God and 'the one deity' are the same and whether the texts are neo-pythagorean and/or gnostic and/or possibly influenced by early Christianity. The texts under consideration, however, are unclear as to exactly what and who θεός is, especially given (i) that in the Poemandres tractate θεός is described as being both male and female (ἀρρενόθηλος) and (ii) that 'archetypes'/deities from classical Greek culture are mentioned, from Psyche to Hermes, and (iii) that Poemandres is described as 'changing their form/appearance' (shapeshifting) in the manner of Greek divinities such as Athena in The Odyssey and Demeter in mythological poems and legends, and (iv) the mention of 'daimons'. This θεός might thus refer to a deity in a classical sense, with the texts describing a mysticism that is essentially a development of existing and past Greek ideas.

To translate θεός as god is therefore, in my view, not helpful given that 'god' is not, in our milieu, a neutral word and therefore tends to impose a certain meaning on the text. In contrast, the transliteration 'theos' is neutral and also aids the curiosity of the reader who might well then ask: what and who, here, is theos?

In regard to εὐσεβέω, is what is meant what we understand by terms such as reverent and pious? Again, given the influence of Christianity over the past two millennia, what such terms now so often denote is redolent of that religion so that such words are not neutral in respect of understanding the spirituality of such ancient Greek texts. Hence why my choice was for an expression: 'awareness of the numinous', which expression encompasses - or seems to me to encompass - an essential aspect of all spirituality, from ancient Greece to Greco-Roman times to Christianity and beyond. There is therefore, yet again, no retrospective re-interpretation of the text resulting from a poor choice of English words.

In considering ἀγαθός my basic guide was ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός in ancient Greece and Greco-Roman times with the sense being not some abstract god-given 'what is good' and 'what is evil', nor of some impersonal idea of 'good' contrasted with some other impersonal idea of 'evil', but rather the difference between good (noble) and bad (rotten) individuals, and which difference (according to so many authors of those times) was revealed, became known, through the deeds done by individuals. An interesting passage illustrating ἀγαθός contrasted with κακός occurs in section eight of the fourth tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum:

τούτων δὲ οὕτως ἔχόντων, ὦ Τάτ, τὰ μὲν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῖν τε  
ὑπῆρξε καὶ ὑπάρξει· τὰ δὲ ἀφ' ἡμῶν ἀκολουθησάτω καὶ μὴ  
ὑστερήστω· ἐπεὶ ὁ μὲν θεὸς ἀναίτιος, ἡμεῖς δὲ αἵτιοι τῶν κακῶν,  
ταῦτα προκρίνοντες τῶν ἀγαθῶν

Nearly all past translations have opted to use the English words 'good' and 'evil', as did John Everard and G.R.S. Mead whose respective translations are,

These things being so, O Tat, that things have been, and are so  
plenteously ministered to us from God; let them proceed also from  
us, without any scarcity or sparing. For God is innocent or guiltless,  
but we are the causes of Evil, preferring them before the Good.

This being so, O Tat, what comes from God hath been and will be  
ours; but that which is dependent on ourselves, let this press  
onward and have no delay; for 'tis not God, 'tis we who are the  
cause of evil things, preferring them to good.

A more recent translation is that of Brian Copenhaver,

Since this is so, Tat, what proceeds from god has been and will be  
available to us. May what comes to us be suited to it and not  
deficient. And the evils for which we are responsible, who chose  
them instead of good things, are no responsibility of god's.

In contrast, I interpret as,

Because of this, then - Thoth - what is from theos can be and has been ours  
So let what accompanies us be that now instead of later.  
For it is we who select dishonour rather than honour  
With theos blameless in this.

Which interpretation emphasises the personal origin of what is done and why what is bad, in personal terms, is - as the author of the text later writes, αὕτη διαφορὰ τοῦ ὁμοίου πρὸς τὸ ἀνόμοιον, καὶ τῷ ἀνομοίῳ ὑστέρημα πρὸς τὸ ὅμοιον - a privation of what is good:

This is the distinction between what is akin and what is different  
With what is different having a privation of what is akin.

Which contrast between personal honour (a nobility of character) and dishonour (a doing of rotten deeds) is rather different from abstract "evil things", and well expresses an important aspect of the ethos of ancient Greece and of Greco-Roman culture; an aspect well-expressed by Sophocles: πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἐκὼν αἰρεῖ πονηρόν ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἀεί battle does not willingly take cowards, but - as of old - the honourable Philoctetes, v.437

This interpretation of ἀγαθός - in the personal terms of such an ethos, rather than as some abstract existent external to the individual as posited by Plato, ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα - is why the author of text also writes,

ὁρᾷς, ὦ τέκνον, πόσα ἡμᾶς δεῖ σώματα διεξελθεῖν, καὶ πόσους χοροὺς δαιμόνων καὶ συνέχειαν καὶ δρόμους ἀστέρων ἵνα πρὸς τὸν ἕνα καὶ μόνον σπεύσωμεν; ἀδιάβατον γὰρ τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές, αὐτῷ δὲ καὶ ἄναρχον, ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν. οὐκ αὐτοῦ οὖν ἀρχὴ γίνεται ἡ γνῶσις

Do you, my son, apprehend how many celestial bodies we have to traverse - How many groups of Daimons and sequential constellations - So that we hasten to the Monas. For the honourable is unpassable, without limit, and unending Even though to us its origin appears to be the knowledge. But even though such knowledge is not the origin of it It yields to us the origin of our knowing. [2]

For Plato's explanation requires a questioning, a philosophical search for ἀληθεία, a type of anados, resulting in a knowing of 'the good', ἡ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἰδέα, and which knowing - which knowledge - is the source, the origin, of all other knowing. Here, the opposite is clearly stated: that such knowledge of 'the good', of what is honourable, is not 'the knowledge' - the conclusion of our anados - but instead only the source of what we know about ourselves

and about others.

This understanding of 'the good', of ἀγαθός, is indeed somewhat controversial - the opposite of what Plato et al theorized and what some seem to have assumed regarding the Corpus Hermeticum - but one which presents an alternative (a somewhat paganus) understanding of such hermeticism as is described in the three tractates under consideration. And an interesting alternative that, to my knowledge, has been long neglected, given the various and the numerous assumptions made regarding the meaning of certain Greek words in texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum.

2016

[1] In order to elucidate my methodology I for brevity only consider here three Greek terms.

[2] As I noted in my commentary on tractate IV:

Reading ἀδιάβατον, which implies that what is honourable is always there, always around, always noticeable when it is presenced by someone. In other words - given the following καὶ ἀπέραντον καὶ ἀτελές - there are always some mortals who will (qv. sections 5 and 8) select honour rather than dishonour: who will (as described in section 4) "receive the perceivation," having won that prize gifted by theos [...]

The expression ἡμῖν δὲ δοκοῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχειν τὴν γνῶσιν is interesting given that it refers to 'the knowledge', which some have construed to refer to the gnosis of certain pagan weltanschauungen. However, since what this particular knowledge is, is not specified, to translate as 'the Gnosis' would be to impose a particular and modern interpretation on the text given what the term gnosticism now denotes. All that can be adduced from the text is that this particular knowledge may refer to and be the knowledge imparted in the text itself: the knowledge that Hermes is here imparting to Thoth.

---

### **A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos**

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can  
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens  
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of  
theos;  
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change  
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of  
honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπάθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονία, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκη (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδρομία/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings

thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend to* captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ  
σημαινομένου χρῆται.

2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.

[1] My translation, from *Ἐρὸς Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. 2015.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay is included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed



details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

---

### Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective.

For the *pathei-mathos* which such literature - and often the associated *mythoi* - can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase *καλὸς κάγαθός*. That is, in the melding of *τὸ καλόν* (the beautiful) and *τὸ ἀγαθόν* (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the *Corpus Hermeticum*:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;  
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.

But the Sophia of the theos is what?  
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, *arête*, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, *τὸ καλόν* refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty - the beautiful - but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κάγαθοι  
ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν  
Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὖειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ  
ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni

utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider "a classical education" – the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle – a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis.

That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

ἀθάνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἀθάνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον,  
τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

December 2019

Extract from a letter to an Oxfordian friend, with footnotes post scriptum

[1] <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos – ὁ θεός – is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek mythoi) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεός is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

---

### **An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture**

One of my fond memories of English schooldays was as a Sixth Form boarder in the late 1960's when I had a room to myself and an allowance from my father who had returned to live and work in Africa.

As recounted elsewhere [1] the allowance allowed me to travel and buy

books, often from bookshops in London, Oxford, and Cambridge, and one such purchase was of the complete, multi-volume, Oxford English Dictionary, and almost every evening I loved

"to dip into it for an hour or so, discovering new words, their etymology, and a quotation or two to betake me, in the days following, to some library or some bookshop to find and to read the work or works in question. I enjoyed the richness, the diversity, the flexibility, of the English language; its assimilation of so many words from other languages, and that ambiguity of sound which sometimes led to or could lead to such variations in spelling as sometimes seemed to annoy those who desired to reform that language and which reform would see its versatility, quirkiness, and heritage, lost in order to fit some boring manufactured schemata." [2]

Such schoolboy habits would prove useful when I began to develop my philosophy of *pathei-mathos* and sought to express my intuitions about Being and about our mortal being through the medium of English words.

Such an expression led me to use some non-English terms mostly from Ancient Greek but occasionally from Latin in the hope that such terms would not only be able to convey my meaning better than some easily mis-understood English term but also might be assimilated into the English language as philosophical terms either in their transliterated English form or in their Greek and Latin form.

Such terms might also reveal my indebtedness to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture and how and why the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is both a "transition from *mythoi* and anthropomorphic deities (*theos* and *theoi*) to an appreciation of the numinous *sans denotatum* and *sans religion*" [3] and thus a return to individual insight and understanding over impersonal abstractions/ideations, over *denotatum*, and over religious and political dogma, with the Latin *denotatum* – used as an Anglicized term and which thus can be used to describe both singular and plural instances of denoting and naming – a useful example of my somewhat idiosyncratic methodology.

Thus and for example I used and use σοφόν instead of σοφός when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of what is presented in a person as skill, or learning, or wisdom.

I used and use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφροσύνη (*sophrosyne*) to suggest a fair and balanced personal judgement rather than the fairly modern English interpretation of *sophrosyne* as "soundness of mind, moderation".

I used and use Δίκη instead of δίκη when the sense implied is "what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as [a] goddess", which is the natural instinct in those of noble *physis* (φύσις) for honour, fairness, and beauty – καλὸς κάγαθός [4] – and thus the natural balance rather than

"the correct/customary/ancestral way" or an abstract, impersonal, modern-type of "justice".

In most such cases the Greek words are used, as I wrote in *A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, in an Anglicized way – as transliterated terms such as pathei-mathos and enantiodromia are – with there being no need to employ Greek inflective forms.

In the cases where the Greek words are not transliterated – σωφρονεῖν as sophronein for example – the intent was to not only provide a direct link to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture but also to signify that the word represents an important or interesting metaphysical principle in the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Hence σοφόν – sophon – is how and why empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal and can presence our physis, the nature of our being, the nature of Being itself, and reveal that Time is not only causal but acausal. It also suggests, as do Δίκα and σωφρονεῖν, the primacy and the importance of individual insight and understanding.

In a world where propaganda and disinformation still proliferate, based as they are on denotatum and often on political dogma and impersonal abstractions/ideations, and in a world where mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) and thus organized religion still seem to dominate, the philosophy of pathei-mathos provides an alternative: the individual way of pathei-mathos and of empathy, based as it is on four axioms:

- (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself;
- (ii) that it is denotatum – and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom – which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being;
- (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and
- (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and – as a causal human presenced effect – for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth. [5]

Does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make this philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps. But since philosophia – φιλοσοφία – is, at least according to my fallible understanding, becoming a friend of σοφόν, [6] and since such a personal friendship involves seeking to understand Being, beings, and Time, and since part of the ethos of the culture of the West – heir to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture – is or at least was a personal and rational quest for understanding and knowledge, then perhaps some effort, as befits those of noble physis who appreciate and who may seek to presence καλὸς κάγαθός, is only to be expected.

April 2019

[1] *Early Years*, in *Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. ISBN 978-1484110744.

[2] *The Joy Of Words*, 2013. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/the-joy-of-words/2013>.

[3] *From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous*. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/01/04/from-mythoi-to-empathy/2018>.

[4] I have described καλὸς κάγαθός in my two recent books *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*.

[5] *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*. 2019. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2019/02/10/physis-and-being/>

[6] *The Way of Pathei-Mathos: A Philosophical Compendiary*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018. ISBN 978-1484096642.

---

## Concerning The Gospel Of John

### A Question Of Interpretation

Vernacular translations are, by the nature of translation, interpretations, with the history of vernacular translations of the Bible - and especially of the Gospels - revealing how such interpretations could be used to support schisms; for example, in the case of Wycliffe's English, the Lollards, and in the case of Luther's German, the Protestant reformation. In addition, some translations enriched the vernacular language itself, as for example, the translations of Tyndale and the King James Bible did in respect of English.

My own interpretation of the Gospel of John is not intended to be schismatic but rather to be unfamiliar, with such unfamiliarity hopefully betaking some readers to the unfamiliar milieu of an ancient Judaea governed as it was by Rome and abode as it was of those Judaeans who believed in a Messias/Messiah, with it being written in the first chapter of the Gospel of John that in, reference to Jesus, Andrew - the brother of Simon Peter - announced: εὐρήκαμεν τὸν Μεσσίαν (we have found the Messias).

My interpretation is intended to be unfamiliar for several reasons. Firstly, because the Gospels were written in Hellenistic (Koine, κοινή) Greek, with the author of the Gospel of John by including colloquial Greek sayings and offering explanations for some particular terms [1] indicating that his intended or actual audience - those reading or hearing his Gospel in late first century and early second century CE - were most probably native speakers of

Hellenistic Greek or at least quite familiar with that language.

Intended to be unfamiliar secondly because the standard English versions of the Gospel of John - and English versions of the other Gospels - have become so familiar to so many people in the West over so many centuries that certain words and terms have acquired particular meanings, with those meanings and certain passages - via iconography, exegesis, and preaching - assuming archetypal status. Hence, and to provide just some examples, our assumptions about God (theos), about 'angels' (τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ), about Heaven (οὐρανός), about sin (ἁμαρτία) and about 'the Holy Spirit' (τὸ πνεῦμα).

An interpretation intended to be unfamiliar, thirdly, because the Gospels were written at a time when Christianity was, in the lands of the Roman Empire, one small religious sect among many others and had yet to develop a standardized doctrinal theology or a centralized ecclesiastical authority, with the Gospel of John not providing any theological explanation of what is meant by theos, by τοὺς ἀγγέλους τοῦ θεοῦ, by οὐρανός, by ἁμαρτία, by τὸ πνεῦμα, and by many other terms. Thus, there is a natural tendency for us to project medieval, Renaissance, and modern meanings onto such terms with the inevitable consequence of us assuming that we understand the message of the Evangelist and thus comprehend at least something of Christianity itself.

In contrast, what are we to make of such translated passages as the following:

I beheld the Spiritus as a dove descend from Empyrean and remain there with him. (1.32)

It was He who sent me to baptize in water, saying to me: 'Upon whosoever you behold the Spiritus descend and remain there with, is the same one who baptizes in Halig Spiritus.' (1.33)

Having spoken to you of earthly things and you lack trust, how can you trust if I speak of things caelestien? (3.12)

And this is the condemnation: That the Phaos arrived in the world but mortals loved the darkness more than the Phaos, for their deeds were harmful. (3.19)

Are we betaken to an unfamiliar milieu where, having read or listened to the evangel attributed to John from familiar translations, we believe we may know something about such things as Heaven (οὐρανός, Empyrean) and the Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα, the Spiritus) but now may have some doubts about their meaning and doubts about how they may relate to the Light (φῶς, Phaos) and thus to a man named Jesus? Are such doubts relevant or perhaps even necessary given that the emphasis in the Gospel seems to be on individuals trusting in the person of Jesus after they had accepted that the narrated signs (σημεῖα) - such as the Passion, the death and resurrection of Jesus, and

his Ascension - indicate that he may well be the only begotten Son of Theos so that, by trusting in him, we have the opportunity of life everlasting?

Such were some of the questions I pondered when a Christian monk, and my fallible interpretation of the Gospel of John, founded on some forty years of reflection and study, is my fallible attempt to find some answers.

2017

[1] Qv. my comments on 1.42 and 1.51.

---

### **On Minutiae And The Art Of Revision**

Over forty years ago, many hours on many days on many months were spent in the library of a monastery reading many books that I now only vaguely recollect. But one of those which does still linger in memory was a work by John Chrysostom concerning the Gospel of John [1], homilies given toward the end of the fourth century Anno Domini, probably in Antioch, and over one and half thousand years before I sat down in a religious environment to read them. This continuity of religious tradition, of language, resonated with me then in a pleasing way as did the scholarly minutiae, sparsely scattered among the preaching, in which he explained some matters such as the use of the definite article in the phrase – from verse 1 of chapter one of the Gospel – θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, Theos was the Logos.

Such minutiae make the process of translation – at least for me and in respect of the Gospel of John – somewhat slow, partly because they can change the meaning; or rather, provide a possible alternative interpretation as is the case in the matter of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. Why, for example, is θεὸς here not ὁ θεὸς (pedantically, the Theos/the God) as at verse 24 of chapter four, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός? Which apparently pedantic question formed part of a somewhat acrimonious theological dispute before, during, and after the time of John Chrysostom; a dispute centred around a possible distinction between (i) The God and (ii) God, father of Jesus, and thus whether Jesus was, like The God, eternally-living. Those who affirmed such a distinction, and who thus came to believe that both Jesus and the πνεῦματος ἁγίου (the Holy Spirit) were not equal to The God, were termed ‘Arians’ (after the Alexandrian priest Arius) and were repeatedly condemned as heretics.

In respect of certain words or phrases it is, as so often, a personal choice between following what has become or is regarded as the scholarly consensus or undertaking one’s own research and possibly arriving at a particular, always disputable, interpretation. Such research takes time – days, weeks, months, sometimes longer – and may lead one to revise one’s own particular interpretation, as occurred recently in respect of my interpretation of θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, which initially and in respect of grammar was a minority one (qv. Jean Daillé) of *The Logos was Theos* rather than the

conventional Theos [God] was the Logos [Word].

In the matter of θεός and ὁ θεός the current consensus is that there is in the Gospel of John no distinction between them. However, the arguments used to support this – from Chrysostom on – are theological and devolve around the use of such terms by John, by other Evangelists, by early Christians such as Paul of Tarsus, and even by the authors of LXX. That is, arguments are made regarding, for example, why the Evangelist wrote ὁ λόγος (the logos) rather than just λόγος: because, it is argued, to distinguish Jesus (identified as the logos) from everyone else. In addition, the Evangelist, and thus his Gospel, are often considered to be divinely-inspired – guided by the Holy Spirit, with the Evangelist thus aware of τὰ βάθη τοῦ θεοῦ [2] – so that there are in that Gospel, as in the others, meanings beyond what an ordinary person might express in Hellenistic Greek.

Over forty years ago I, subsequent to some doubts, accepted such theological arguments and therefore had little interest – beyond disputations concerning the actual meaning of words such as λόγος in classical and Hellenistic Greek – in further questioning the accuracy of conventional interpretations of the Gospel of John such as that of the Douay-Rheims version.

Now, as someone with a rather paganus weltanschauung, brought-into-being by πάθει μάθος, but respectful still of other manifestations of the numinous, I strive to understand that Gospel in the cultural milieu of the ancient Roman Empire and thus as a work, written in Hellenistic Greek, by a man who either had known Jesus and participated in his life, or who had known and was close to someone who did. That is, I approach the text as I did the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the extant writings of Sophocles and Aeschylus; as an original work, possibly a self-contained one, where the author conveys something derived from their knowledge, learning, and personal experience, and where the meanings of certain words or passages may sometimes be explained or placed into context by comparison with other authors writing in the same language in the same or in a similar cultural milieu.

Thus, when I consider a phrase such as πνεῦμα ὁ θεός I wonder about the meaning of πνεῦμα, of θεός, and of ὁ θεός, not in terms of later explanations – in this instance ‘the Holy Spirit’, God, the God – and not in terms of assuming the author is learned concerning and referring to or quoting or paraphrasing texts such as LXX, but rather as terms, ideas, germane to the world, the place, in which the author lived. Understood thus, θεός is just theos; πνεῦμα is just pneuma or ‘spiritus’; with words such as those and other words such as λόγος possibly becoming explained or placed into context by the narrator as the narrative proceeds.

In the matter of my interpretation of the Gospel of John [3], revision is therefore inevitable as I proceed, slowly, hopefully studiously, from verse to verse and from chapter to chapter, for I really have no preconceptions about what such slow studious progress will or might reveal about what has already been interpreted (or misinterpreted) by me, especially as minutiae can take one on various detours, and which detours sometimes cause one to



travel far away from the Judaea that existed when Pontius Pilate was Praefectus of that Roman province.

July 2017

[1] *Homiliae in Ioannem*, volume 59 of the Migne Patrologia Graeca series.

[2] "The profundities of Theos." *First Epistle To The Corinthians*, 2.10. Wycliffe, and the King James Bible: "The deep things of God."

[3] <http://www.davidmyatt.info/gospel-john.html>

---

### Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum

Three of the many Greek terms of interest in respect of understanding the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts that comprise the Corpus Hermeticum are ἀγαθός and νοῦς and θεός, with conventional translations of these terms as 'good' and 'Mind' and 'god' (or God) imparting the sense of reading somewhat declamatory sermons about god/God and 'the good' familiar from over a thousand years of persons preaching about Christianity interspersed with definitive philosophical statements about 'Mind', as if a "transcendent intelligence, rationality," or a "Mental or psychic faculty" or both, or something similar, is meant or implied.

Thus the beginning of tractate VI - τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὃ Ἀσκληπιέ, ἐν οὐδενί ἐστιν, εἰ μὴ ἐν μόνῳ τῷ θεῷ, μᾶλλον δὲ τὸ ἀγαθὸν αὐτός ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς αἰεὶ - and dealing as it does with both ἀγαθός and θεός, has been translated, by Mead, as "Good, O Asclepius, is in none else save God alone; nay, rather, Good is God Himself eternally," [1] and by Copenhaver as "The good, Asclepius, is in nothing except in god alone, or rather god himself is always the good." [2]

In respect of νοῦς, a typical example is from Poemandres 12 - ὁ δὲ πάντων πατὴρ ὁ Νοῦς, ὢν ζωὴ καὶ φῶς, ἀπεκύησεν ἄνθρωπον αὐτῷ ἴσον, οὗ ἡράσθη ὡς ἰδίου τόκου· περικαλλὴς γάρ, τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς εἰκόνα ἔχων· ὄντως γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεὸς ἡράσθη τῆς ἰδίας μορφῆς, παρέδωκε τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πάντα δημιουργήματα. The beginning of this is translated by Mead as "But All-Father Mind, being Life and Light, did bring forth Man co-equal to Himself, with whom He fell in love, as being His own child for he was beautiful beyond compare," and by Copenhaver as "Mind, the father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man like himself whom he loved as his own child. The man was most fair: he had the father's image."

Similarly, in respect of Poemandres 22 - παραγίνομαι αὐτὸς ἐγὼ ὁ Νοῦς τοῖς ὁσίοις καὶ ἀγαθοῖς καὶ καθαροῖς καὶ ἐλεήμοσι, τοῖς εὐσεβοῦσι, καὶ ἡ παρουσία μου γίνεται βοήθεια, καὶ εὐθὺς τὰ πάντα γνωρίζουσι καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἰλάσκονται ἀγαπητικῶς καὶ εὐχαριστοῦσιν εὐλογοῦντες καὶ ὑμνοῦντες τεταγμένως πρὸς αὐτὸν τῇ στοργῇ - which is translated by Mead

as "I, Mind, myself am present with holy men and good, the pure and merciful, men who live piously. [To such] my presence doth become an aid, and straightway they gain gnosis of all things, and win the Father's love by their pure lives, and give Him thanks, invoking on Him blessings, and chanting hymns, intent on Him with ardent love," and by Copenhaver as "I myself, the mind, am present to the blessed and good and pure and merciful - to the reverent - and my presence becomes a help; they quickly recognize everything, and they propitiate the father lovingly and give thanks, praising and singing hymns affectionately and in the order appropriate to him."

As explained in various places in my commentary on tractates I, III, IV, VIII, and XI, and in two appendices [3], I incline toward the view that - given what such English terms as 'the good', Mind, and god now impute, often as a result of two thousand years of Christianity and post-Renaissance, and modern, philosophy - such translations tend to impose particular and modern interpretations on the texts and thus do not present to the reader the ancient ethos that forms the basis of the varied weltanschauungen outlined in the texts of the Corpus Hermeticum.

To avoid such impositions, and in an endeavour to express at least something of that ancient (and in my view non-Christian) ethos, I have - for reasons explained in the relevant sections of my commentary - transliterated θεός as theos [4], νοῦς as perceiveration, or according to context, perceiverance; and ἀγαθός as, according to context, nobility, noble, or honourable [5]. Which is why my reading of the Greek of the three examples above provides the reader with a somewhat different impression of the texts:

° Asclepius, the noble exists in no-thing: only in theos alone; indeed, theos is, of himself and always, what is noble. [6]

° Perceiveration, as Life and phaos, father of all, brought forth in his own likeness a most beautiful mortal who, being his child, he loved.

° I, perceiveration, attend to those of respectful deeds, the honourable, the refined, the compassionate, those aware of the numinous; to whom my being is a help so that they soon acquire knowledge of the whole and are affectionately gracious toward the father, fondly celebrating in song his position.

But, as I noted in respect of ἀγαθός in the *On Ethos And Interpretation* appendix, whether these particular insights of mine are valid, others will have to decide. But they - and my translations of the tractates in general - certainly, at least in my fallible opinion, convey an impression about ancient Hermeticism which is rather different from that conveyed by other translations.

Extract from a letter in reply to a correspondent who, in respect of the Corpus Hermeticum, enquired about my translation of terms such as ἀγαθός and νοῦς. I have, for publication here, added a footnote which references my translations of and commentaries on five tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

ooo

## Notes

[1] G.R.S Mead. *Thrice-Greatest Hermes*. Theosophical Society (London). 1906.

[2] B. Copenhaver. *Hermetica*. Cambridge University Press. 1992

[3] My translation of and commentary on tractates I, III, IV, and XI - and the two appendices - is available in pdf format at  
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/08/corpus-hermeticum-i-iii-iv-xi/>

My translation of and commentary on tractate VIII is available in pdf format at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/20/corpus-hermeticum-viii/>

[4] To be pedantic, when θεός is mentioned in the texts it often literally refers to 'the' theos so that at the beginning of tractate VI, for example, the reference is to 'the theos' rather than to 'god'.

[5] In respect of 'the good' - τὸ ἀγαθόν - as 'honourable', qv. Seneca, *Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*, LXXI, 4, "summum bonum est quod honestum est. Et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt."

[6] The suggestion seems to be that 'the theos' is the origin, the archetype, of what is noble, and that only through and because of theos can what is noble be presenced and recognized for what it is, and often recognized by those who are, or that which is, an eikon of theos. Hence why in tractate IV it is said that "the eikon will guide you,"; why in tractate XI that "Kosmos is the eikon of theos, Kosmos [the eikon] of Aion, the Sun [the eikon] of Aion, and the Sun [the eikon] of mortals," and why in the same tractate it is said that "there is nothing that cannot be an eikon of theos," and why in Poemandres 31 theos is said to "engender all physis as eikon."

As I noted in my commentary - qv. especially the mention of Maximus of Constantinople in respect of Poemandres 31 - I have transliterated εἰκὼν.

---

## **Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos**

### **Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations**

#### **Abstraction**

An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

According to the philosophy of pathei-mathos, this presumption of knowledge and understanding by the application of abstractions to beings - living and otherwise - is false, for abstractions are considered as a primary means by which the nature of Being and beings are and have been concealed, requiring as abstractions do the positing and the continuation of abstractive opposites in relation to Being and the separation of beings from Being by the process of ideation and opposites.

#### **Acausal**

The acausal is not a generalization - a concept - deriving from a collocation of assumed, imagined, or causally observed Phainómenon, but instead is that

wordless, conceptless, a-temporal, knowing which empathy reveals and which a personal πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous often inclines us toward. That is, the acausal is a direct and personal (individual) revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming.

What is so revealed is the a-causal nature of some beings, the connexion which exists between living beings, and how living beings are emanations of ψυχή.

Thus speculations and postulations regarding the acausal only serve to obscure the nature of the acausal or distance us from that revealing of the acausal that empathy and πάθει μάθος and an appreciation of the numinous provide.

## **ἀρετή**

Arête is the prized Hellenic virtue which can roughly be translated by the English word 'excellence' but which also implies what is naturally distinguishable - what is pre-eminent - because it reveals or shows certain valued qualities such as beauty, honour, valour, harmony.

## **Aristotelian Essentials**

The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are: (i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses; (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses; (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world'; (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first *Rules of Reasoning* which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials

Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

The philosophy of pathei-mathos adds the faculty of empathy - and the

knowing so provided by empathy - to these essentials. Part of the knowing that empathy reveals, or can reveal, concerns the nature of Being, of beings, and of Time.

## **ἁρμονία**

ἁρμονία (harmony) is or can be manifest/discovered by an individual cultivating wu-wei and σωφρονεῖν (a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement).

## **Compassion**

The English word compassion dates from around 1340 CE and the word in its original sense (and as used in this work) means benignity, which word derives from the Latin *benignitatem*, the sense imputed being of a kind, compassionate, well-mannered character, disposition, or deed. Benignity came into English usage around the same time as compassion; for example, the word occurs in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* [ ii. 483 ] written around 1374 CE.

Hence, compassion is understood as meaning being kindly disposed toward and/or feeling a sympathy with someone (or some living being) affected by pain/suffering/grief or who is enduring vicissitudes.

The word compassion itself is derived from *com*, meaning together-with, combined with *pati*, meaning to-suffer/to-endure and derived from the classical Latin *passiō*. Thus useful synonyms for compassion, in this original sense, are *compassivity* and *benignity*.

## **Cosmic Perspective**

The Cosmic Perspective refers to our place in the Cosmos, to the fact that we human beings are simply one fragile fallible mortal biological life-form on one planet orbiting one star in one galaxy in a Cosmos of billions of galaxies. Thus in terms of this perspective all our theories, our ideas, our beliefs, our abstractions are merely the opinionated product of our limited fallible Earth-bound so-called 'intelligence', an 'intelligence', an understanding, we foolishly, arrogantly, pridefully have a tendency to believe in and exalt as if we are somehow 'the centre of the Universe' and cosmically important.

The Cosmic Perspective inclines us – or can incline us – toward wu-wei, toward avoiding the error of hubris, toward humility, and thus toward an appreciation of the numinous.

## **δαίμων**

A δαίμων is not one of the pantheon of major Greek gods – θεοί - but rather a lesser type of divinity who might be assigned by those gods to bring good

fortune or misfortune to human beings and/or watch over certain human beings and especially particular numinous (sacred) places.

## **Denotatum**

The term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - is used in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

Thus understood, and used as an Anglicized term, denotatum is applicable to both singular and plural instances and thus obviates the need to employ the Latin plural denotata.

## **Descriptor**

A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy).

A descriptor differs from an ideation, category, or abstraction, in that a descriptor describes what-is as 'it' is observed, according to its physis (its nature) whereas an abstraction, for example, denotes what is presumed/assumed/idealized, past or present or future. A descriptor relies on, is derived from, describes, individual knowing and individual judgement; an abstraction relies on something abstract, impersonal, such as some opinion/knowing/judgement of others or some assumptions, theory, or hypothesis made by others.

An example of a descriptor is the term 'violent' [using physical force sufficient to cause bodily harm or injury to a person or persons] to describe the observed behaviour of an individual. Another example would be the term 'extremist' to describe - to denote - a person who treats or who has been observed to treat others harshly/violently in pursuit of some supra-personal objective of a political or of a religious nature.

## **δίκη**

Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on.

A personified Judgement - the Δίκη of Hesiod - is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (Odyssey, III, 244).

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the term Δίκαια - spelt thus in a modern

way with a capital Δ - is sometimes used to intimate a new, a particular and numinous, philosophical principle, and differentiate Δίκη from the more general δίκη. As a numinous principle, or axiom, Δίκη thus suggests what lies beyond and what was the genesis of δίκη personified as the goddess, Judgement – the goddess of natural balance, of the ancestral way and ancestral customs.

## **Empathy**

Etymologically, this fairly recent English word, used to translate the German Einfühlung, derives, via the late Latin sympathia, from the Greek συμπάθεια - συμπάθης - and is thus formed from the prefix σύν (sym) together with παθ- [root of πάθος] meaning enduring/suffering, feeling: πάσχειν, to endure/suffer.

As used and defined by the philosophy of pathei-mathos, empathy - ἐμπάθεια - is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about (a revealing of) another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as envisaged by that way of life, then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings - and thus differs in nature from compassion.

Empathic knowing is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Empathy reveals or can reveal the nature, the ontology (the physis) - sans abstractions/ideations/words - of Being, of beings, and of Time. This revealing is of the the a-causal nature of Being, and of how beings have their genesis in the separation-of-otherness; and thus how we human beings are but causal, mortal, fallible, microcosmic emanations of ψυχή.

## **Enantiodromia**

The unusual compound Greek word ἐναντιοδρομίας occurs in a summary of the philosophy of Heraclitus by Diogenes Laërtius.

Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness, and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about.



An important and a necessary part of enantiodromia involves a discovery, a knowing, an acceptance, and - as prelude - an interior balancing within individuals, of what has hitherto been perceived and designated as the apparent opposites described by terms (descriptors) such as 'muliebral' and 'masculous'.

The balance attained by - which is - enantiodromia is that of simply feeling, accepting, discovering, the empathic, the human, the personal, scale of things and thus understanding our own fallibility-of-knowing, our limitations as a human being

## ἔρις

Strife; discord; disruption; a quarrel between friends or kin. As in the Odyssey:

ἢ τ' ἔριν Ἀτρεΐδῃσι μετ' ἀμφοτέροισιν ἔθηκε.

Who placed strife between those two sons of Atreus

Odyssey, 3, 136

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Eris is thus the child of Polemos and Hubris.

## Extremism

By extreme is meant to be harsh, so that an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic.

Hence extremism is considered to be: (a) the result of such harshness, and (b) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate.

In the terms of the philosophy/way of pathei-mathos, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris; and error which enantiodromia - following from πάθει μάθος - can sometimes correct or forestall. The genesis of extremism - be such extremism personal, or described as political or religious - is when the separation-of-otherness is used as a means of personal and collective identity and pride, with some 'others' - or 'the others' - assigned to a category considered less worthy than the category we assign ourselves and 'our kind/type' to.

Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculine nature.

## εὐταξία

The quality, the virtue, of self-restraint, of a balanced, well-mannered conduct especially under adversity or duress, of which Cicero wrote:

Haec autem scientia continentur ea, quam Graeci εὐταξίαν nominant, non hanc, quam interpretamur modestiam, quo in verbo modus inest, sed illa est εὐταξία, in qua intellegitur ordinis conservatio

Those two qualities are evident in that way described by the Greeks as εὐταξίαν although what is meant by εὐταξία is not what we mean by the moderation of the moderate, but rather what we consider is restrained behaviour... [My translation]

De Officiis, Liber Primus, 142

## Honour

The English word honour dates from around 1200 CE, deriving from the Latin honorem (meaning refined, grace, beauty) via the Old French (and thence Anglo-Norman) onor/onur. As used by The Way of Pathei-Mathos, honour means an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous. An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, natural dignity, and valour.

In respect of early usage of the term, two quotes may be of interest. The first, from c. 1393 CE, is taken from a poem, in Middle English, by John Gower:

And riht in such a maner wise  
Sche bad thei scholde hire don servise,  
So that Achilles underfongeth  
As to a yong ladi belongeth  
Honour, servise and reverence.

John Gower, Confessio Amantis. Liber Quintus vv. 2997-3001 [Macaulay, G.C., ed. The Works of John Gower. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1901]

The second is from several centuries later:

" Honour - as something distinct from mere probity, and which supposes in gentlemen a stronger abhorrence of perfidy, falsehood, or cowardice, and a more elevated and delicate sense of the dignity of virtue, than are usually found in vulgar minds."

George Lyttelton. History of the Life of Henry the Second. London, Printed for J. Dodsley. M DCC LXXV II [1777] (A new ed., cor.) vol 3, p.178

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, the personal virtue of honour is considered to be a presencing, a grounding, an expression, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη. That is, as a means to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη.

## **Humility**

Humility is used, in a spiritual context, to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἀρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace.

## **Ideation**

To posit or to construct an ideated form - an assumed perfect (ideal) form or category or abstraction - of some-thing, based on the belief or the assumption that what is observed by the senses, or revealed by observation, is either an 'imperfect copy' or an approximation of that thing, which the additional assumption that such an ideated form contains or in some way expresses (or can express) 'the essence' or 'the ethos' of that thing and of similar things.

Ideation also implies that the ideated form is or can be or should be contrasted with what it considered or assumed to be its 'opposite'.

## **Immediacy-of-the-Moment**

The term the 'immediacy-of-the-moment' describes both (i) the nature and the extent of the acausal knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and (ii) the nature and extent of the morality of the philosophy of pathei-mathos.

Empathy, for example, being a natural and an individual faculty, is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate,

and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. An acceptance of (i) the unwisdom, the hubris, of arrogantly making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience/beyond the scope of our pathei-mathos.

Morality, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, is a result of individuals using the faculty of empathy; a consequence of the insight and the understanding (the acausal knowing) that empathy provides for individuals in the immediacy-of-the-moment. Thus, morality is considered to reside not in some abstract theory or some moralistic schemata presented in some written text which individuals have to accept and try and conform or aspire to, but rather in personal virtues - such as such as compassion and fairness, and εὐταξία - that arise or which can arise naturally through empathy, πάθει μάθος, and thus from an awareness and appreciation of the numinous.

### **Innocence**

Innocence is regarded as an attribute of those who, being personally unknown to us, are therefore unjudged us by and who thus are given the benefit of the doubt. For this presumption of innocence of others - until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, prove otherwise - is the fair, the reasoned, the numinous, the human, thing to do.

Empathy and πάθει μάθος incline us toward treating other human beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated; that is they incline us toward fairness, toward self-restraint, toward being well-mannered, and toward an appreciation and understanding of innocence.

### **Masculous**

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence /competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

Masculous is from the Latin masculus and occurs, for example, in some seventeenth century works such as one by William Struther: "This is not only the language of Canaan, but also the masculous Schiboleth." *True Happines, or, King Davids Choice: Begunne In Sermons, And Now Digested Into A Treatise*. Edinbvrgh, 1633

### **Muliebral**

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits,

abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

## **Numinous**

The numinous is what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή.

See my *From Mythoi To Empathy: A New Appreciation Of The Numinous* for more details.

## **Pathei-Mathos**

The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning learning from adversary, or wisdom arises from (personal) suffering; or personal experience is the genesis of true learning.

When understood in its Aeschylean context, it implies that for we human beings pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority. That is, the understanding that arises from one's own personal experience - from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering - is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more relevant, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words/advice one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

Thus, pathei-mathos, like empathy, offers we human beings a certain conscious understanding, a knowing; and, when combined, pathei-mathos and empathy are or can be a guide to wisdom, to a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature (our physis), our relation to Nature, and our relation to other human beings, leading to an appreciation of the numinous and an appreciation of virtues such as humility and εὐταξία.

## **Politics**

By the term politics is meant both of the following, according to context. (i) The theory and practice of governance, with governance itself founded on two fundamental assumptions; that of some minority - a government (elected or unelected), some military authority, some oligarchy, some ruling elite, some tyrannos, or some leader - having or assuming authority (and thus power and influence) over others, and with that authority being exercised over a specific geographic area or territory. (ii) The activities of those

individuals or groups whose aim or whose intent is to obtain and exercise some authority or some control over - or to influence - a society or sections of a society by means which are organized and directed toward changing/reforming that society or sections of a society in accordance with a particular ideology.

## **Πόλεμος**

Heraclitus fragment 80

Πόλεμος is not some abstract 'war' or strife or kampf, but rather that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being (the separation of beings from Being), and thus not only that which manifests as δίκη but also accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being, become bound together - be whole - again by enantiodromia.

According to the recounted tales of Greek mythology attributed to Aesop, ἔρις was caused by, or was a consequence of, the marriage between a personified πόλεμος (as the δαίμων of kindred strife) and a personified ὕβρις (as the δαίμων of arrogant pride) with Polemos rather forlornly following Hubris around rather than vice versa. Thus Eris is the child of Polemos and Hubris.

Furthermore, Polemos was originally the δαίμων (not the god) of kindred strife, whether familial, of friends, or of one's πόλις (one's clan and their places of dwelling). Thus, to describe Polemos, as is sometimes done, as the god of war, is doubly incorrect.

## **Physis (φύσις)**

See Appendix I: The Concept Of Physis.

## **Religion**

By religion is meant organized worship, devotion, and faith, where there is: (i) a belief in some deity/deities, or in some supreme Being or in some supra-personal power who/which can reward or punish the individual, and (ii) a distinction made between the realm of the sacred/the-gods/God/the-revered and the realm of the ordinary or the human.

The term organized here implies an established institution, body or group - or a plurality of these - who or which has at least to some degree codified the faith and/or the acts of worship and devotion, and which is accepted as having some authority or has established some authority among the adherents. This codification can relate to accepting as authoritative certain writings and/or a certain book or books.

## **Separation-of-Otherness**

The separation-of-otherness is a term used to describe the implied or assumed causal separateness of living beings, a part of which is the distinction we make (instinctive or otherwise) between our self and the others. Another part is assigning our self, and the-others, to (or describing them and us by) some category/categories, and to which category/categories we ascribe (or to which category/categories has/have been ascribed) certain qualities or attributes.

Given that a part of such ascription/denoting is an assumption or assumptions of worth/value/difference and of inclusion/exclusion, the separation-of-otherness is the genesis of hubris; causes and perpetuates conflict and suffering; and is a path away from ἀρμονία, δίκη, and thus from wisdom.

The separation-of-otherness conceals the nature of Beings and beings; a nature which empathy and pathei-mathos can reveal.

## **Society**

By the term society is meant a collection of people who live in a specific geographic area or areas and whose association or interaction is mostly determined by a shared set of guidelines or principles or beliefs, irrespective of whether these are written or unwritten, and irrespective of whether such guidelines/principles/beliefs are willingly accepted or accepted on the basis of acquiescence. These shared guidelines or principles or beliefs often tend to form an ethos and a culture and become the basis for what is considered moral (and good) and thence become the inspiration for laws and/or constitutions.

As used here, the term refers to 'modern societies' (especially those of the modern West).

## **σωφρονεῖν**

I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

## **State**

By the term The State is meant:

The concept of both (1) organizing and controlling - over a particular and

large geographical area – land (and resources); and (2) organizing and controlling individuals over that same geographical particular and large geographical area by: (a) the use of physical force or the threat of force and/or by influencing or persuading or manipulating a sufficient number of people to accept some leader/cliq/ minority/representatives as the legitimate authority; (b) by means of the central administration and centralization of resources (especially fiscal and military); and (c) by the mandatory taxation of personal income.

## **The Good**

For the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, 'the good' is considered to be what is fair; what alleviates or does not cause suffering; what is compassionate; what is honourable; what is reasoned and balanced. This knowing of the good arises from the (currently underused and undeveloped) natural human faculty of empathy, and which empathic knowing is different from, supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

## **Time**

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, Time is considered to be an expression of the nature - the φύσις - of beings, and thus, for living beings, is a variable emanation of ψυχή, differing from being to being, and representing how that living being can change (is a fluxion) or may change or has changed, which such change (such fluxions) being a-causal.

Time - as conventionally understood and as measured/represented by a terran-calendar with durations marked days, weeks, and years - is therefore regarded as an abstraction, and an abstraction which tends to conceal the nature of living beings.

## **ὑβρις**

ὑβρις (hubris) is the error of personal insolence, of going beyond the proper limits set by: (a) reasoned (balanced) judgement – σωφρονεῖν – and by (b) an awareness, a personal knowing, of the numinous, and which knowing of the numinous can arise from empathy and πάθει μάθος.

Hubris upsets the natural balance – is contrary to ἁρμονίη [harmony] – and often results from a person or persons striving for or clinging to some causal abstraction.

According to The Way of Pathei-Mathos, ὑβρις disrupts - and conceals - our appreciation of what is numinous and thus of what/whom we should respect, classically understood as ψυχή and θεοί and Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες and δαιμόνων and those sacred places guarded or watched over by δαιμόνων.



## **Way**

The philosophy of pathei-mathos makes a distinction between a religion and a spiritual Way of Life. One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way.

Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions.

## **Wisdom**

Wisdom is both the ability of reasoned - a balanced - judgement, σωφρονεῖν, a discernment; and a particular conscious knowledge concerning our own nature, and our relation to Nature, to other life and other human beings: rerum divinarum et humanarum. Part of this knowledge is of how we human beings are often balanced between honour and dishonour; balanced between ὕβρις and ἀρετή; between our animalistic desires, our passions, and our human ability to be noble, to morally develop ourselves; a balance manifest in our known ability to be able to control, to restrain, ourselves, and thus find and follow a middle way, of ἀμυνή.

## **Wu-wei**

Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in The Way of Pathei-Mathos/The Numinous Way to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from

empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it.

## ψυχή

Life qua being. Our being as a living existent is considered an emanation of ψυχή. Thus ψυχή is what 'animates' us and what gives us our nature, φύσις, as human beings. Our nature is that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις.

---

### Appendix I

#### The Concept Of Physis

The term physis - φύσις - was used by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurs in texts such as the Pœmandres and Ἰερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

Physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the Corpus Hermeticum) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [1], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be.

Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as *arête* (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [2]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [3].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the *Poemandres* tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [4] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [5]

Physis is also personified in the *Ἱερός Λόγος* tractate:

"The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis For Physis is presenced in the divine." [6]

### **The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos**

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [7] and by abstractions [8], both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [9] is a concealment of that relationship;

- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings. [10]

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological.

March 2015

### Notes

[1] See my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[2] πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε ἀξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[3] See <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[4] Pœmandres 3; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[5] Pœmandres 16-18.

[6] Ιερὸς Λόγος 3; qv. my *Ιερὸς Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*, 2015.

[7] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[8] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[9] Refer, for example, to *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness* section of

in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

[10] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

---

## Appendix II

### Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθῶν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora,  
et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is

cosmically presented therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathē-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

January 2018

[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

---

## Appendix III

### On Ethos And Interpretation

One of the intentions of these translations of mine of various tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum is provide an alternative approach to such ancient texts and hopefully renew interest in them beyond conventional current, and past interpretations, which - based on using terms such as God, Mind, and Soul - makes them appear to be proto-Christian or imbued with an early Christian weltanschauung or express certain philosophical and moralistic abstractions.

Why an alternative approach to such ancient texts? For two reasons.

First, because the choice of English words hitherto in respect of Greek terms such as λόγος, νοῦς, θεός, ἀγαθός, φῶς, and φύσις, seems to me to be based on various assumptions such as that those and other terms express something definite and philosophical and relate to various ancient 'schools of thought'. I dissent from this view; instead, regarding such terms as descriptors used by individuals to express their own often mystical weltanschauung based on their own personal insights or, more probably, on what they had learned from others and/or from various MSS they had read. That is, many of the tractates present mythos, and/or ancient aural esoteric traditions, rather than the teachings of some established and philosophical 'school of thought'. Thus, such Greek terms require contextual interpretation and are often best transliterated or at least referred to the ethos underlying such weltanschauung and such mythos.

Second, because such texts seem to me to be, in the matter of cosmogony and metaphysics, more influenced by the classical Greek and the Hellenistic ethos than by any other, and thus in many ways are representative of that ethos as it was being developed, or as it was known, at the time texts such as those in the Corpus Hermeticum were written. An ethos, a cosmogony and a metaphysics, exemplified - to give just a few examples - by terms such as ἄρρενόθηλυς (Poemander), by the shapeshifting of Poemander (τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἡλλάγη τῇ ἰδέᾳ), by mention of a septenary system (Poemander, Tractate XI), by the 'voyages of the psyche' (Tractate XI: 20) and by terms such as ἱερός Λόγος (Tractate III) and which term dates back to the time of Hesiod [1] .

In respect, for example, of the ἱερός Λόγος tractate, my view - as noted in the Preface of my translation of and commentary on that tractate - is that it is the story of genesis according to an ancient pagan, and esoteric, weltanschauung; a text in all probability older than the other texts in the Corpus Hermeticum and certainly older, as an aural tradition, than the story given in the Biblical Genesis; and a text which the author of the Poemander tractate might well have been familiar with, as a reading of both texts indicates.

As an example of my alternative approach (and perhaps the most controversial example) is my interpretation of ἀγαθός as honour/nobility, τὸ ἀγαθὸν as the honourable/the noble/nobility, and thus as embodied in brave,

noble, trustworthy, honest, individuals - exemplified in legend by the likes of the hero Leonidas - which interpretation I am inclined to view as an expression of both the classical Greek and the Greco-Roman (Hellenic) ethos, just as the expression τί ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια, attributed to a certain Roman, is an expression of that ethos; whereas ἀγαθός as some disputable 'abstract', impersonal or philosophical 'good' does not in my view exemplify that ethos and the milieu in which it flourished. Furthermore, given how such a disputable 'abstract', moral, good has been generally understood for the last millennia (partly due to the influence of Christianity, partly due to post-Renaissance philosophy, and partly due to Western jurisprudence) then it seems desirable to avoid using the term 'good' in translations of such ancient texts - as also elsewhere, in other metaphysical tractates of the Hellenic era - since 'good' now has certain post-Hellenic connotations which can distance us from what such ancient tractates may well express and have expressed.

Thus, such an iconoclastic interpretation of such an important ancient Greek word - in terms of individuals and their physis, as opposed to in terms of some abstract, moral, impersonal schemata or dogma or as part of some conjectured philosophy - might provide a new perspective on some of the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

But whether this particular insight of mine regarding ἀγαθός is valid, others will have to decide.

2017

[1] (a) ἔστι λόγος περὶ αὐτοῦ ἱρὸς λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 48, s3. (b) ἔστι ἱρὸς περὶ αὐτοῦ λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 62, s2. (c) ἔστι δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν ἱρὸς λόγος λεγόμενος. Book II, Chapter 81, s2.

---

cc 2020 David W Myatt

All translations by DW Myatt

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons  
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) license  
and can be freely copied and distributed, under the terms of that license.

---



## The Hubris Of Abstractions

One of the fundamental things about the modern, currently disparaged and little understood, philosophy of pathei-mathos (a/k/a the numinous way of pathei-mathos) is its antinomian nature: that it replaces the abstraction, and thus the authority, of the modern nation-State with the authority of the individual, with antinomian philosophically implying

"a passive rejection of the customs, the beliefs, the authority of the modern nation-State with its *idées fixes* which include the idea that the nation-State through its government, its institutions, and its laws is the ultimate authority and judge of what is 'right' and 'wrong', not the judgment of the individual, and which supra-personal authority can and should be enforced by the nation-State through a police force or a law-enforcement agency, through the Courts, and if necessary through its armed forces all of which operate through a hierarchical chain-of-command. This antinomianism is expressed, for example, by those who seek places where they or their family can live 'off-grid' or in a rural location; by those those who withdraw from society to live a more spiritual way of life; and in general by those who seek to live in a more harmonious way with Nature.

Myatt's antinomianism is expressed: (i) by his philosophy of pathei-mathos which in many ways is revolutionary with its individualism, its emphasis on empathy and personal honour, and its dissection of the causal abstractions, the denotata, and which abstractions {1} not only inform and now motivate the governments of the modern West but also, because of their embedded dialectic of opposites, perpetuate the cycle of suffering; (ii) by what is arguably the new paganism that can be developed from Myatt's works; and (iii) by his renaissance of the roots of Western culture which are Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, paganism and not the Hebraistic culture - based around the Old and New Testaments - which formed the basis for the Christianity that for over a thousand years dominated Western culture." {2}

That philosophy of pathei-mathos also places all modern dehumanizing personal abstractions into the necessary Aeonic, Cosmic, perspective: as short-lived manifestations of our human hubris. As, because of their physis, living for a certain amount of causal Time - perhaps a century or so in the case of political and social abstractions - and then being replaced or dying a natural death; or in the case of a nation-State (or of a hegemony or Empire) with some of their abstractions, restrictive laws, decrees, and diktats, perhaps living for several centuries albeit often assuming a different name.

Such an understanding, such a Cosmic supra-personal perspective, should therefore enable us to place our own lives, and that of our family, past, present and future, into context. Thus we can consider the exhortations of, for example, our government to support or to be a part of this or that armed conflict, or support this or that external nation-State, for 'patriotic' or other reasons such as to ensure 'freedom', as part of their demand that we accept their authority over and above what we, via our own pathei-mathos and empathy or via our own detailed research using primary sources, have discovered; manifest as such a discovery is in an appreciation that it is the authority of the individual which, in Aeonic, Cosmic, terms is valid: which aligns with, which presences, wisdom understood as

"an appreciation of, and of our relation to, the other mortal beings, Hominid and otherwise, with which we share this planet, and of our relation to Being itself: that is, to The Numinous, The Acausal, The One-The-Only (τὸ ἓν), the Monas (μονάς) and The-Unity." {3}

This perspective and personal understanding is, in modern terms, revolutionary, and therefore it is no surprise that the person who developed the philosophy of pathei-mathos from his own pathei-mathos and from his research using primary sources, has been and is the subject of a disinformation, a smear, campaign by those who represent, or who have a vested interest in maintaining the abstractions that dominate, modern Western nation-States. A two-fold campaign based (i) on unproven allegations, widely spread by the mass media, about involvement with the Occult, {4} and (ii) on the accusation that his rejection of extremism is a deception. {5}

Revolutionary, and relevant in our times, because dehumanizing impersonal abstractions supported by nation-States include allegations against individuals and groups based on abstractions such as denoted by modern terms such as 'hate-speech' and its implied assumptions about a motive or motives based on ethnicity and a perceived 'nationalism', with individuals deemed to be promoting or acting upon such an abstraction dealt with severely. Meanwhile, at the same time, such nation-States hypocritically support conflict and wars such as the current ones in Ukraine and Palestine and supply weapons to their nation-State allies there, with such large-scale impersonal conflicts internally fuelled by hatred and assumed ethnic or national differences, resulting in thousands upon thousands of deaths and injuries and the destruction of infrastructure and civilian dwellings.

Such temporal, causal, examples aside, as the founder of the revolutionary philosophy of pathei-mathos wrote:

"It is my contention that my personal 'numinous way of pathei-mathos', or at least the foundations of that Way, which are personal empathy and pathei-mathos, could possibly be the basis for other individuals to develop their own numinous weltanschauung free from the influence of the manufactured impersonal causal abstractions that shaped the ancient world, some of which still influence the modern world, and the more recent impersonal causal abstractions which since the Second World War are prevalent and now authoritative in the modern world because supported by many if not most governments and Institutions in the Western world, and often now used by governments as the basis for criminal laws." {6}

But it will possibly take a century or more for some of us to appreciate, and perhaps much longer for us *en masse* to

appreciate, such a Cosmic perspective and act upon that modern revelation born of pathei-mathos. If, that is, we as a hubriatic species can ever appreciate it sufficiently to change what-is and what has-been into something redolent of, which presences, the numinous.

Perhaps we, in our hubris, should remember the phrase:

Memento homo quia pulvis es, et in pulverem reverteris

Recall, mortal, you are dust and you will revert to being dust

Rufus Malisius  
2024

ooo o ooo

{1} An abstraction is

"a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past.

In philosophical terms, a causal abstraction is an ideation, an idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος), which is explained and/or defined by words and terms (denotata) and which invariably is used to form or describe a particular category of things." *Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/impersonal-abstractions.pdf>

{2} *An Anti-Establishment Heretic*, included as the Introduction to *Seven Interviews With A Modern Heretic*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/dwm-seven-interviews-v1.pdf>

{3} *Notes On War, Suffering, And Personal Judgement*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/dwmyatt-notes-war-suffering.pdf>

{4} The allegations are summarized in *An Establishment Orthodoxy*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/myatt-the-establishment-orthodoxy.pdf>

As described in *David Myatt: A Reckoning*, "an important, invariably overlooked, aspect of the pejorative public, widely-reported and widely-believed, statements - tropes - made and spread about Myatt is that no evidence from primary sources is or ever has been presented in support of them." <https://archive.org/download/dm-reckoning/dm-reckoning.pdf>

Since the allegations rely on secondary and tertiary sources, and thus on fallacies of reasoning such as the appeal to authority and ad populum, see also: *Wikipedia: A Tertiary Source Of Opinions And Allegations*, <https://www.scribd.com/document/704474183/A-Tertiary-Source-Of-Opinions-And-Allegations>

{5} As with the allegation about Occultism, the accusations about deception are unproven. In a 2022 interview - included in *Seven Interviews With A Modern Heretic*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/dwm-seven-interviews-v1.pdf> - Myatt was asked the following question:

Some of your former political opponents do not believe what one socialist called your "change of heart". Hence they claim you are still a neo-nazi; that what you write and have written since 2010 such as your autobiography should be treated with suspicion and not taken seriously; that unless you come out in public to attend some sort of 'media circus' and directly answer their questions, they will never believe you; and that you are so concerned about your reputation that you continually search 'social media' sites and

anonymously try to not only engage with them but try to cover-up your past. How do you react to such claims?

His reply was:

φημι ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γνῶναι τὸν θεόν. Such a seeking to apprehend such things is what now and for the past twenty or so years has occupied me. As for trying to cover-up my past almost everything I wrote during my neo-nazi decades and my decade as a Muslim is archived somewhere. In the case of my neo-nazi decades by what used to be called 'Special Branch' as I learned following my arrest by them in 1998, and also archived on the 'world-wide web'. In the case of my decade as a Muslim an archive of my Muslim writings also exists on the 'worldwide web'.

Therefore, any attempt by me or by anyone to 'cover-up' my past would be pointless. In addition, I have no desire whatsoever to do so since what exists documents my mistakes, failings, extremism, and arrogance which I want those who may be interested to know, and which acknowledgment of my past by me led to that 'change of heart'. One person has used such archives to document my extremism and the weltanschauung I developed after my rejection of that extremism. {7}

As for what they or others claim or believe about me now and the past, it is their burden howsoever brought-into-being, howsoever nurtured and howsoever it might be described by them or by others.

{6} *Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/impersonal-abstractions.pdf>

{7} *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2021/12/11/a-national-socialist-ideologue/>

A printed version is also available, *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist*, 2023, ISBN-13979-8392990900

# Seven Interviews With A Modern Heretic

[Preface](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Some Questions for David Myatt, July 2024](#)

[An Interview On A Summer Solstice Eve, 2024](#)

—  
[A May Day Interview, 2024](#)

—  
[An Uncertainty Of Knowing: Four Interviews, March 2022-March 2023](#)

[Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos](#)

o o o o o o o o

## Preface

Between March 2022 and July 2024 the modern heretic David Myatt gave seven interviews. Together these primary sources provide a reasonably detailed understanding of Myatt himself; of his individualistic and apolitical post-2011 philosophy of pathei-mathos; of his peregrinations as a political and religious extremist; and why he rejected extremism.

The Introduction, *An Anti-Establishment Heretic*, explains why he is considered a modern heretic.

- \* Introduction
- \* Some Questions for David Myatt, July 2024
- \* An Interview On A Summer Solstice Eve, 2024
- \* A May Day Interview, 2024
- \* An Uncertitude Of Knowing: Four Interviews, March 2022-March 2023
- \* Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

The *An Uncertitude Of Knowing: Four Interviews* also includes the June 2022 text *Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* which provides an overview of his philosophy, and Myatt's 2012 text *Analysing National Socialism* where he explains why his post-2011 philosophy is contrary to and incompatible with National Socialism.

The text *Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos: Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos* is by Myatt, published in 2024, in which he writes that

"my contention is that my personal 'numinous way of pathei-mathos', or at least the foundations of that Way, which are personal empathy and pathei-mathos, could possibly be the basis for other individuals to develop their own numinous weltanschauung free from the influence of the manufactured impersonal causal abstractions that shaped the ancient world, some of which still influence the modern world, and the more recent impersonal causal abstractions which since the Second World War are prevalent and now authoritative in the modern world because supported by many if not most governments and Institutions in the Western world, and often now used by governments as the basis for criminal laws."

---



## Introduction An Anti-Establishment Heretic

### Antinomianism

Antinomian, as used here, implies a passive rejection of the customs, the beliefs, the authority of the modern nation-State with its *idées fixes* which include the idea that the nation-State through its government, its institutions, and its laws is the ultimate authority and judge of what is 'right' and 'wrong', not the judgment of the individual, and which supra-personal authority can and should be enforced by the nation-State through a police force or a law-enforcement agency, through the Courts, and if necessary through its armed forces all of which operate through a hierarchical chain-of-command. This antinomianism is expressed, for example, by those who seek places where they or their family can live 'off-grid' or in a rural location; by those those who withdraw from society to live a more spiritual way of life; and in general by those who seek to live in a more harmonious way with Nature.

Myatt's antinomianism is expressed: (i) by his philosophy of pathei-mathos which in many ways is revolutionary with its individualism, its emphasis on empathy and personal honour, and its dissection of the causal abstractions, the denotata, and which abstractions {1} not only inform and now motivate the governments of the modern West but also, because of their embedded dialectic of opposites, perpetuate the cycle of suffering; {2} (ii) by what is arguably the new paganism that can be developed from Myatt's works; {3} and (iii) by his renaissance of the roots of Western culture which are Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, paganism and not the Hebraistic culture - based around the Old and New Testaments - which formed the basis for the Christianity that for over a thousand years dominated Western culture.

David Myatt's antinomian reputation, currently for a few and possibly in the future for a rational and scholarly minority, is in his philosophy of pathei-mathos; {4} in prose such as, to give just two examples, *One Tree Among Many* {5} and *Memories Of Manual Labour* {6}; in works such as *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, and *Tua Est Diaboli Ianua*; {7} and in his translations of and extensive commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum. {8}

### Overview

Myatt's philosophy, based as it is on empathy and personal honour, leads us away from the Judeo-Christian illusion of causal abstractions (a naming) and a dialectic of opposites based on such naming with the inevitable apocalyptic eschatology; with his philosophy presenting a modern and rational paganism based on Greco-Roman values.

His *Good, Evil, Honour, and God*, his 29 page monograph included in his book *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* {9} is a relevant example of his writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos, and in which monograph he compares the ontologies of Christianity, Islam, and the modern nation-state with the ontology he proposes for his own philosophy.

For example, after discussing the ontologies of Christianity, Islam, and the modern nation-state, he presents in Parts Four and Five his argument in favour of a personal ontology deriving from pathei mathos, as well as presenting his conclusions regarding the need to lead a tolerant, compassionate, honourable, way of life.

Thus in Part Four he writes that the aim is:

"to be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei.

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others [...]

[There is] no need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living – sans denotatum – that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for humility." {9}

Interestingly, and in reference to Christianity, in his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* he writes that what he has found when translating the Gospel of John

"is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and

said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed.

This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'. A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John." {10}

In Part Five of *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* he explains the origins of his philosophy:

"Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair." {9}

Another relevant example is his *In Reply To Some Questions* (2012) in which he explains in greater detail the intent of his writings about extremism and about his philosophy of πάθει μάθος – the 'numinous way' – and that those writings

"have been written as expressions of my own feelings, experiences, and philosophical reflexions, with no particular audience in mind, save in many instance for a few personal friends. In effect, they document my interior struggles, my attempts to find solutions to certain philosophical problems, and my desire to understand the how and the why of my hubris, of my extremist decades, and thus to understand and acknowledge the mistakes of my past – to understand and acknowledge the suffering I caused – and understand the error of extremism itself [...]

What I hope to achieve by such writings is to communicate – or to attempt to communicate – some of my insights, some of my experiences, some of my solutions, and some of my conclusions, such as they are, and as personal and as fallible as they are, and dealing as they do with extremism, with an extremist life, and with the personal life of the hubriatic man I was [...]

My concern – and therefore that of the philosophy of πάθει μάθος – is with spiritual (numinous) and personal matters. With our own individual interior change and reformation; with the perspective and insight that empathy and pathei-mathos provide: which is of personal virtues such as compassion, love, humility, empathy, πάθει μάθος, honour, and wu-wei, and thus with treating human beings as individuals [...]

My writings over the past few years have been personal, 'mystical', and philosophical, with the latter documenting the development and refinement of my 'numinous way' culminating in my moral philosophy of pathei-mathos which is concerned with individuals and how individuals might discover and learn to appreciate ἁρμονίη and δίκη and so move toward wisdom. So, what I wanted – rather, what I felt compelled to do following a personal tragedy – was to try and understand myself, my suffering-causing past; to try and discover what undermined ἁρμονίη and δίκη, and what ὕβρις was and what it caused and why." {11}

#### **A Modern Pagan Philosophy**

One other reason why Myatt's mystical philosophy of pathei-mathos may be antinomian and unappreciated today is that his philosophy is, for many of those who have studied it, a modern pagan philosophy in the tradition of Greco-Roman philosophy.

In his 2019 autobiographical essay *An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture* he explained that he uses some non-English terms mostly from Ancient Greek but occasionally from Latin,

"in the hope that such terms would not only be able to convey my meaning better than some easily misunderstood English term but also might be assimilated into the English language as philosophical terms either in their transliterated English form or in their Greek and Latin form.

Such terms might also reveal my indebtedness to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture and how and why the philosophy of pathei-mathos is both a transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion and thus a return to individual insight and understanding over impersonal abstractions/ideations, over denotatum, and over religious and political dogma, with the Latin denotatum – used as an Anglicized term and which thus can be used to describe both singular and plural instances of denoting and naming – a useful example of my somewhat idiosyncratic methodology.

Thus and for example I used and use σοφόν instead of σοφός when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of what is presenced in a person as skill, or learning, or wisdom. I used and use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) to suggest a fair and balanced personal judgement rather than the fairly modern English interpretation of sophrosyne as soundness of mind, moderation." {12}

In that essay he asks then answers a rhetorical question about using such Greek and Anglicized terms:

"Does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make this philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps. But since philosophia – φιλοσοφία – is, at least according to my fallible understanding, becoming a friend of σοφόν, and since such a personal friendship involves seeking to understand Being, beings, and Time, and since part of the ethos of the culture of the West – heir to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture – is or at least was a personal and rational quest for understanding and knowledge, then perhaps some effort, as befits those of noble physis who appreciate and who may seek to presence καλὸς κάγαθός, is only to be expected."

In his 2017 monograph *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* he explains the context and meaning of the term καλὸς κάγαθός, writing that

"we are, ontologically, emanations of and presence Being, and are a connexion to the cosmos – to other presencings of Being – through, in terms of epistemology, not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess arête, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning – nobility of character. Which Greek phrase expresses the ethics, the high personal standards, of the ancient paganus weltanschauung we have been discussing." {13}

In his *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and in his other 2017 monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {14} he writes of the difference between classical paganism and revealed religions such as Christianity. That there is, in his view, a fundamental

"difference between a religious apprehension of the numinous – based on received and venerated texts, on exegesis – and the paganus apprehension of the numinous as manifest in Greco-Roman culture, based as it is on an individual, and an intuitive, empathic and thus wordless, apprehension of the numinous." {15}

This "empathic apprehension of the numinous" is at the core of Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos. In his *Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* he writes that empathy is a means by which we can

"understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings – and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation) implicit on opposites and dialectic, is a covering-up of Being." {16}

In *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, he writes that

"Greco-Roman culture is inextricably bound to the culture of the West and formed the basis for the European Renaissance that emerged in the 14th century, one aspect of which was a widespread appreciation of classical Art, of classical literature, and of texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum."

Which why his translations of eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, and of other Greek texts,

"when studied together enable us to appreciate and understand the classical, pagan, ethos and thence the ethos of the West itself [...] What Myatt does in his translations [of the Corpus Hermeticum] is paint a picture of classical – and of Hellenic – culture and especially of Hellenic mysticism; a culture and a mysticism which is pagan and based on individuals, on tangible things such as honesty, and not on moralistic and religious and impersonal abstractions. That is, he reveals the Greco-Roman ethos – the pagan ethos – underlying the hermetic texts and which is in contrast to that of Christianity with its later, medieval and Puritanical, impersonal moralizing." {17}

Which understanding of the ethos of the West, sans Christianity, the politically orientated individuals and organizations who are vociferous critics of Myatt most probably view as heresy, as evidence that Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos undermines the Judeo-Christian culture and tradition that still forms the basis of many Western nation-states, and evidence also of how Myatt's philosophy may aid those who champion a particular and pagan interpretation of Western culture.

As one commentator noted, Western culture is

"exemplified according to Myatt by καλὸς κάγαθός. That is, by those who "conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning – nobility of character," {17}

and which nobility of character is manifest in "the virtues of personal honour and manners." {18} As Myatt noted in his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*,

"My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of δίκη, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain – prevent – others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness – as



lived, presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope – even need – of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἁρμονίη we, in such honourable moments, are." {9}

In an essay written in September 2014 he explained that

"personal honour – which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία – [is] (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour – by its and our φύσις – is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment." {19}

According to Myatt's philosophy, empathy and personal honour {20} replace the Judeo-Christian illusion of causal abstractions (a naming) and a dialectic of opposites based on such naming with the inevitable apocalyptic eschatology which engenders a real-world struggle or a war between a posited and a supra-personal, abstract, 'good' and 'evil'.

Myatt's philosophy leads us away from such abstractions, back toward the pagan insight of Greeks such as Heraclitus:

"Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done." {21}

In chapter three of his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* Myatt provides not only the Greek text of two other fragments by or attributed to Heraclitus but also his own translations:

"Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound." Fragment 53

"All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia." Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7.

In that chapter he writes that

"Empathy also reveals why the assumption that abstracted, ideated, opposites apply to or should apply to living beings – and that they thus can supply us with knowledge and understanding of living being – disrupts the natural balance, resulting in a loss of ἁρμονίη [harmony] and συμπάθεια and is therefore a manifestation of the error of ὕβρις."

In place of such abstracted, ideated, Judeo-Christian conflicting opposites there is in both Greco-Roman paganism, and in Myatt's philosophy, Summum Bonum. As Myatt notes in his *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, quoting the Roman philosopher Seneca,

"What is injurious to such a [pagan] harmonious balance is what is dishonourable, with τὸ ἀγαθὸν – Summum Bonum – thus understood as honestum, as what is honourable, noble: summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt. Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

the greatest good is that which is honourable. Also – and you may wonder at this – only that which is honourable is good, with all other 'goods' simply false and deceitful.

For honestum is how hubris can be avoided and balance maintained, and is the essence of καλὸς κάγαθός which presences the numinous, the divine, in and among mortals." {14}

This rational pagan understanding is worlds away from the abstractions that dominate the modern nation-state and marks him as a modern heretic.

Rufus Malisius  
2024  
v.1.03

ooo

{1} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2024/08/04/developing-the-numinous-way-of-pathei-mathos/>

{2} qv. Myatt's *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf>

{3} Refer to *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-and-paganism-v3b/myatt-and-paganism-v3b.pdf>

{4} For an overview of Myatt's philosophy, see <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

{5} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2023/06/06/one-tree-among-many/>

{6} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/dwm-memories-manual-labour.pdf>

{7} (a) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf> (b) *Tua Est Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{8} *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, (a) Gratis pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf> (b) Printed version: ISBN 978-1976452369

{9} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{10} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

His translation of and extensive commentary on chapters 1-5 of the Gospel of John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/gospel-john-chapters1-5.pdf>

{11} In Reply To Some Questions (2012), <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/questions-for-dwm-2012/>

{12} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2019/04/23/an-indebtedness-to-ancient-greek-and-greco-roman-culture/>

{13} *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf>

{14} *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{15} *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, op.cit.

{16} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathe-mathos-v7.pdf>

{17} *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/myatt-paganism.pdf>

Myatt's translation of and commentary on tracts from the *Corpus Hermeticum* is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{18} See, for example the chapter *Honour In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* in *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, op.cit.

{19} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos – A Précis*. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf>

{20} In regard to the European – the Western – tradition of personal honour see, for example, William Segar, *Booke of Honor & Armes*, published in 1590. The book is available at [https://books.google.com/books?id=LII\\_AQAAMAAJ](https://books.google.com/books?id=LII_AQAAMAAJ)

{21} The translation of fragment 1 is by Myatt who in his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* provides the Greek text:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εὐκασί, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὐδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται

## Some Questions for David Myatt

July 2024

T.C.D.

≡ ≡ ≡

*What is the ethos of the Martial Art of Physis, what was the idea behind it and do you still view it as an applicable practice?*

The ethos was implied in the term physis (φύσις) which I then understood not simply as the conventional English translations of 'Nature, or as the 'nature' or 'character' of a person, but rather in the Aristotelian sense of a 'meson' (μέσον) which is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be, as in my later translation of his Metaphysics 9.1051a,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

"Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is." <sup>1</sup>

That style of defence, for it was a style rather than an Art, was only demonstrated, rather than taught, to one person who went on to write about it and in the process somewhat divorced it from its source which was the Confucian 'Hsing' which I learned about while living in Singapore and which word, so I was informed, was also used by Taoists, with the Confucian sense suggesting to me what the Greek φύσις did.

≡ ≡ ≡

*From my understanding you would have lived geographically close to the "Magick Shop" called The Sorcerer's Apprentice back in the 70's. Were you active in that scene, did you ever come into contact with Chris Bray, Austin Osman Spare, Peter J. Carroll, and/or Ray Sherwin, and if so, what was the discourse and atmosphere like?*

No, I never visited that shop while living in Leeds nor met the individuals you mention. My contact with Mr Bray, such as it was, was by means of postal letters and formed part of what turned out to be a misguided and in hindsight a reprehensible attempt to form an 'underground' neo-nazi honeytrap. As I endeavoured to explain in my 2012 essay *A Matter Of Honour*, in response to claims made by Jacob Senholt,

"Finally, the omitted facts and circumstances that do not support Senholt's claims and conclusions include: (1) My publicly stated admission, made in the 1990's in correspondence with Professor Kaplan and others - and publicly repeated by me many times in the past ten and more years - that my occult involvement, such as it was in the 1970's and later, was for the singular purpose of subversion and infiltration in the cause of National-Socialism, with part of this being to spread racist ideas and denial of the holocaust. Thus one such occult group I associated with was a honeytrap, and the whole intent was political, revolutionary, not occult and not to with 'satanism'. It was a matter of using, or trying to use, such occult groups for a specific neo-nazi purpose without any interest in or personal involvement with the occult..."

Not long after the formation of this honeytrap a good political friend of mine, who at the time was briefly associated with the National Front, took charge of the small group and in subsequent years would occasionally ask me for a favour, one of which was writing, in the early 1980s an article titled *Witch of the Welsh Marches* which was subsequently published in Mr Bray's *Lamp of Thoth* magazine with the title mistakenly corrected by him to 'Witch of the Welsh Marshes.' I also sent to Mr Bray a 1970s article of mine titled *The Approach Of The Dark Gods* which, if my ageing memory is correct, was also published in that magazine.

The first article simply recounted my meeting with an elderly woman when I was living in Shropshire, with the second article similarly recounting old pagan traditions one person who had joined that honeytrap in the 1970s had spoken about.

I did mention doing a favour for that friend of mine in a 1998 taped interview, with an iniquitous person of the anti-fascist variety, <sup>2</sup> and refused to name this friend. A refusal because I had personally given that person my word of honour not to do so. A few years earlier I had mentioned this friend, again without naming him, in a letter dated 20 June 1996 to Professor Kaplan who wrote, in the book *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subculture* published in 1998, that my "interaction with England's occult underground was undertaken in a clandestine effort to influence [some] to adopt National Socialist beliefs" and that my relationship with the occult is also based on personal friendship and an agreement to agree to disagree on many things.

≡ ≡ ≡

*Was there any particularly important event that occurred for you and your associates in 1997?*

Yes, it was the arrest of Charlie Sargent and Chris Castle and their subsequent conviction for murder. I had given Charlie and Steve Sargent a personal pledge of loyalty and so stayed loyal, accepting his version of events and believing not only that it was Browning who stole the missing money but also that Browning had betrayed the Cause by giving evidence in a Court of Law for the Prosecution. I had also been informed that Browning and his gang were the ones spreading malicious, unproven, rumours that Charlie was a Police informer whereas it was Browning himself who was co-operating with the Police; hence his turn as a witness for the Prosecution and the fanciful, scripted, tale he told in Court.

As I wrote at the time,

"there was some feuding within C18 itself, with Browning challenging Charlie for the leadership and accusing him - on the basis of ZOG disinformation - of all sorts of things, such as stealing some funds. As for Charlie, he was convinced that Browning had stolen the missing C18 funds [...]

Instead of doing the honourable thing - closing ranks against the State - Browning went to the Police and agreed to give evidence in a ZOG Court against Charlie. Since we all were supposed to regard the Police, the Courts and the whole system of so-called justice run by our government as our sworn enemies, this to me at least amounted to treachery of the worst kind, and so I challenged Browning, in public, to a duel. I did this not once, but twice." <sup>3</sup>

Apropos Browning, another iniquitous person of the anti-fascist variety, in his book, *Homeland: Into a World of Hate*, made several accusations about me without providing any evidence from primary sources, as well as published some rumours about me again without providing any evidence or providing my side of the story. For instance, he claimed that "when Myatt later falls out with Will Browning, he insists on a duel... I'm told he backed down when The Beast claims the right to use baseball bats as weapon."

The truth is that, impersonally through a contact (Kevin Watmough) and via e-mail, I learned that apparently Browning did suggest such a weapon, and in a reply to Watmough stated that the only weapons which could be honourably used were deadly weapons, such as swords or pistols. I included with my reply a copy of the Rules of Duelling, and re-affirmed my challenge to fight a duel using such deadly weapons. I received no reply from Watmough and was not contacted in any way by either Browning or any his supporters despite the fact that Browning and his gang knew where I lived, with my then wife and family in a detached house in a village near Malvern from which house I produced my *The National-Socialist* newsletter in support of the NSM and where I would be arrested, as part of Operation Periphery, by Special Branch officers based at Scotland Yard during a dawn raid in February 1998.

≡ ≡ ≡

*Have you ever visited Test Valley, and if so, how did it make you feel?*

Not that I recall. In fact, the only place in Hampshire I can recall visiting is Winchester, to stay with a comrade from Column 88 and to tour the Cathedral.

≡ ≡ ≡

*What happened before the summer of 1998 that caused you to abandon everything you were working on and convert to Islam? Was it an international attempt to explore another culture for personal insight? What was that experience like for you? Did you take away any profound gnosis?*

As I endeavoured to explain in a Summer 2022 interview,

"In 1998 I turned away from National-Socialism to Islam because during a decade (1988-1998) of foreign travels the culture, the Muslims, of the Muslim lands - and especially of Egypt - slowly, almost imperceptibly, impressed me as did, and perhaps more so, travels alone in the Sahara Desert where I wordlessly felt intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God." <sup>4</sup>

One of these journeys into the desert involved me in cycling from Cairo to the oasis of Daklah laden with fifteen litres of water in three plastic containers; one atop the rear rack and one each in the panniers on either side, sufficient according to my calculations to last until the first stop at Bahariya oasis, with the terrain *hammada*, flat rock-strewn, desert with some wind-blown sand, rather than archetypal sand-dunes. On that first and the subsequent stop at Farafra I encountered, during my brief overnight stays, the Adhan as I had in Cairo. But there, in those at the time still rather isolated places, hedged in by desert, the Adhan somehow seemed more relevant, more numinous, as if in some way it embodied those wordless intimations of Being, of θειότης, of divinity-presenced.

"The numinous is θειότης, divinity-presenced, as in tractate XI v. 11 of the Corpus Hermeticum, θειότητα μίαν, and as in Plutarch, De Pythiae Oraculis, 407a, 398a-f. The numinous is essentially what is, or what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) that which is felt, experienced, or understood as

sacred, numinal, sublime, divine, awe-inspiring, beautiful, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control or meaningfully express through the medium of words. For Christians, it is considered to be God; for Muslims, Allah; for the Romans, divinitas; for others ancient and modern, it was and is considered to be expressible, or intimated, by mythoi and presenced in ὁ θεός, the deity, and/or by θεοί, the gods." <sup>5</sup>

I could not help contrasting this experience with my violent, propaganda-strewn, decades as a fanatical hateful National-Socialist, and it was such feelings, such experiences, such intimations, that culminated in me, on my return to Cairo, buying a copy of The Quran with Arabic text and an English translation, and, on my return to England, beginning to study Islam, followed by a visit to the nearest Mosque.

≡ ≡ ≡

*In the article Witch of the Welsh Marches that you wrote for Lamp of Thoth you mention happening across a Cunning Woman with some interesting abilities. Could disclose more information on this event and the individual?*

Having just re-read that old item perhaps the only relevant remembering is how she was accepted by the few local, rural-dwelling, people who knew her with the terms 'witch' and 'witchcraft' and 'cunning woman' never used by them in reference to her. My use of the terms 'witch' and 'cunning woman' were thus assumptions which I naively and wrongly applied to her.

≡ ≡ ≡

*You are certainly a man that has a passionate interest in ancient mythology, but I'm curious what you know about the mythos of King Arthur?*

While living in rural Shropshire from the late 1970s to the late 1980s I did hear some old folk tales about King Arthur and connections to that county and jotted some of them down, which scribblings I subsequently lost although I did send some of them to an artistic friend I made during the latter part of that period. The person in question apparently became so enamoured of rural South Shropshire, and such mythoi, that he subsequently settled, for a while at least, in that area.

One such tale recounted that Arthur was buried in a mound in what later became Shrewsbury town; that the Nyneve of Le Morte D'Arthur dwelt in a Shropshire lake; and that Arthur and his Knights fought a battle near the Camlad river.

≡ ≡ ≡

*You have mentioned that cycling is the most civilised form of transport. Could you expand on your reasoning and how it plays into your ethos and philosophy?*

An interesting question and such an expression seems to be that something I might have written although I cannot now recall when and in what particular missive among the thousands.

Certainly, musing on cycling mostly in Britain and often in rural areas from the late 1960s to past the year 2010, it felt and still feels very civilized to me involving some physical effort to produce motion, a direct connection with one's surroundings and with the weather of the moment; and producing no noise. There was a lovely feeling in the freedom to just being able to cycle somewhere. I also enjoyed the 'race of truth' - cycling time trials - at both local club level and those organized by what seemed to me the very British amateur-run Road Time Trials Council. Not that I ever won any club or RTTC time trials or even came close to winning. I also failed to break the hour for a 25 mile time trial although I twice was within a few minutes with the joke among my club being that I might have succeeded had I shaved off my beard. However, I did, one year, win my club's Best All Rounder trophy for the most consistent rider over a season.

The only connection I can make between such experiences and feelings, and my ethos (whatever that might be) and my philosophy, is pathei-mathos; a personal learning; of being in and with Nature through a certain physical effort, and of silently discovering new horizons as in cycling in the Sahara Desert and as in cycling English lanes, tracks, and roads as that almost year in the 1980s cycling every working day from Shrewsbury town to my place of rural employment near Bishop's Castle and then back again the same day and how, that Winter, the road was one day only kept open by a Snow Plough with several feet of ploughed snow lining the verges for over a week. Despite or possibly because of the effort - there was a steepish hill leading toward Bishop's Castle - and the cold there was a beauty breeding a calmness within.

≡ ≡ ≡

*During your time in the north of England did you ever visit Stanton Moor, and if so, were there any memorable locations?*

No, the nearest I ever was to that particular place was over a decade later while cycling in one day from Shropshire to

Fulwood near Sheffield via Buxton, Miller's Dale and Hathersage. An enjoyable if at times testing bicycle ride particularly as I had chosen to ride what cyclists of my era called a 'fixed wheel' cycle with a medium (42x16) gear, whose saving graces were the Mercian 531 frame and forks and a broken-in Brooks Professional leather saddle.

Which for some reason returns us to your question about cycling and whether it may be connected to my, as yet still - at least to me - unknown, ethos.

David Myatt  
July 29<sup>th</sup> 2024

1. qv. Appendix Two, *Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α, in *Physis And Jesus Of Nazareth*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/dwmyatt-physis-and-jesus.pdf>

2. Iniquitous because of the unproven allegations and assumptions made and propagated in the media, a few examples of which are that Myatt "lies through his teeth" - made to journalist Justin Ling in an item published in March 2022 - and that I am still a neo-nazi, with my philosophy of pathei-mathos and rejection of extremism a deception with such post-2011 writings thus not to be taken seriously. Thus he, and similar iniquitous persons of the anti-fascist variety, placed and place lies and propaganda on behalf of their beliefs before veracity, honour, and decency.

3. <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t45466/?postcount=1#post287751>

4. Interview, Summer 2022, included in *An Uncertainty Of Knowing: Four Interviews*, 2023, ISBN 978-8394746575

5. *Empathy And Pathei-Mathos As A Guide*, in *Notes On War, Suffering, And Personal Judgement*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/dwmyatt-notes-war-suffering.pdf>

## An Interview With David Myatt On A Summer Solstice Eve

RS: Three recent and connected articles {1} written in response to an academic article about you {2} raise several interesting questions, for example about Vindex as archetype, and especially, as described in the *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity* article, about

"how the ideas and mythos were developed, evolved, {by you} over many years away from severe ideological, impersonal, and moralistic generalizations toward an emphasis on personal change through an authentic, first-hand, appreciation of virtues such as reason, restraint, and an empathy with all living things wrought through a rural living,"

and what if anything is left of those ideas and that mythos in your philosophy of pathei-mathos, and if nothing of them remain then who not?

DM: The authors of those 'three connected articles' were correct regarding how I during my former extremist years understood the term 'authentic', as "original; of one who does something for themselves, or of the 'principle' one or thing or {of a} being." That is, not in the sense used by Clive Henry in his article about me.

Hence I formerly regarded 'race' then 'the folk' and then a type of rural community as authentic; latterly as causal manifestations of the numinous understood then, and I quote, as

"Something is numinous if it has beauty and awe. Something which is divinely-inspired or divinely-representative is numinous. What is numinous is generally what is revered, or regarded as sacred - as spiritual or divine. Nature herself is numinous - a wonderful, awe-inspiring mystery. The numinous is an expression of the acausal - of the Unity behind causal, temporal, appearance." {3}

As for what is now left of those ideas and that mythos: absolutely nothing since in my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos the emphasis is on the individual, their empathy, their pathei-mathos, and therefore on the wordless-knowing that they reveal. Hence, what is authentic is that individual revealing and not some mythos, not some idea by someone else or by anything posited by some ideology, political or religious or social. As I wrote in 2022 in *Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*:

"as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεὸς, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi." {4}

Furthermore, my disputable understanding now is that the numinous is

"what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή." {5}

"in terms of numinosity, empathy presents or can present to us in the immediacy of the personal moment an individual intimation or wordless knowing of the numinous, which intimation or knowing places our mortal life, and all we connect with it or is connected to it, into a supra-personal perspective which is a-causal and of Being itself, the source of beings and all being; of which Being we as a mortal are one finite deathful emanation. Which perspective brings with it or can bring with it the wordless knowing of the unwisdom of words." {6}

Thus, we can know the numinous wordlessly through personal empathy and through our personal pathei-mathos.

RS: Isn't that idealistic and not therefore realistic or applicable to most humans today around the world who are forced to struggle and endure suffering in order to just survive, or who live in poverty?

DM: Unfortunately, that is so. Personally, I have no answers to how to alleviate suffering, en masse, or how to alleviate poverty, en masse. Or how to solve the many other problems that exist in our modern world as they did in the past. All I have is my own fallible learning from experience which included forty years as an extremist who caused or who incited suffering.

But it is not enough, on the short time-scale of decades. Yet I nurture the probably naive hope that such a learning might influence a few people who personally and in the longer perspective might affect some change and thus be the genesis of something positive in regard to such suffering and such poverty.

My admittedly precarious understanding is that attempts by modern governments, well-intentioned as they may be, are or often seem to be offset by the suffering some of their other policies, internal and external, cause or have caused

based as those policies are on supra-personal abstractions, and sometimes also by the abrogation of policies by the government that succeeds them.

RS: Returning now to your extremist past, do you regret composing and publishing your National Socialist writings?

DM: Yes.

RS: That said, are you concerned they are still available?

DM: Yes, and No. No, because they document, for others, both my extremism and the extremism of a particular ideology, where by extremism I mean:

"to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic. Hence extremism is considered to be: (i) the result of such harshness, and (ii) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate. In the philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris." {7}

A further no, because they are a reminder of my past errors and fanaticism and of the need for a personal expiation. Part of which expiation I believe, correctly or mistakenly, is being honest about my past extremism and another part of which is, again correctly or mistakenly, my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos and my other, personal, writings since 2012 such as *Almost Mid-Summer*, {8} and *Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing*. {9}

Yes, I am concerned since others may be inspired and possibly were inspired by them; although I have the perhaps naive hope that my writings since 2012 may somewhat offset that.

RS: In some of those NS writings such as *Why We Must Return To The Land* you eulogized the English rural life and manual labour as in these two extracts from your *Letters From An English Farm* {10} which were quoted in the aforementioned *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity* article:

"Another warm beautiful Spring day in the English fields of the kind that reminds how wonderful and simple life can and should be: there seem to be no problems here, by this small stream, and I sit on the now longish, greening grass beside it beneath a sky of variegated blue with only the sounds of birds for company. No breeze to stir the trees of the overgrown copse behind.

There, three yards away, a bare grass-free patch where animals have come to drink, leaving prints in the now dried mud: two deer, a fox. There is no human-made war here; no rockets, missiles, bombs; and I am left again to wonder with sadness why our species never learns. Once, many times, anger at such injustice would have roused me, all but controlled me, and I would have sallied forth to try and make things better. But now: now, I feel only the centuries of longing that have brought some of our species to that perspective, that compassion, that empathy that has grown within me as grass grows with each warming Spring. Such a gift, this soil." {10}

"I have learned that one of the most harmful things is an ideology, of whatever kind, political, religious, social: a belief we have the answers, and that some law, some government, some abstract idea, some political or social policy, or religious belief, can and will change things for the better, even though - as it almost always does - such a thing involves some suffering, some deaths, some people being deprived of their liberty, their freedom, and some individuals using whatever arts of manipulation they can to convince others of the correctness of such a thing, which is always supra-personal, and as such always involves some people, or some government, having some dishonourable 'authority' over others, on pain of punishment.

The simple way of reason, of restraint, of empathy with all living things, of symbiosis with Nature does involve us changing ourselves but such change involves only a free, conscious, individual, choice. Can we accept some of the hardships, the frugality, that such a life brings because we know that this is how we can and should live and that by so living we are not only not harming others, but aiding ourselves, our family, or locality, Nature and the Cosmos? All else seems, now, inauthentic, unnecessary, a turning away from the knowledge, the understanding, we have achieved - and especially a turning away from that empathy, that consciousness, that awareness of the matrix, of us as a connexion, a living nexus, which I have begun to feel is the essence of our humanity." {10}

My question is: does your philosophy of pathei-mathos retain anything of that idealism or personal experience?

DM: No it does not, which is perhaps remiss of me since such a rural way of life was instrumental in me re-connecting with Nature in a numinous way sans words, ideas, ideology and abstractions, and which re-connection placed my own life into a supra-personal perspective and began the process, before the death of Francis in 2006, of the re-evaluation of myself and of extremism that years later resulted in my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

So therefore I perhaps should write something about how an individual, or a family, can presence the numinous in a wordless way through such a rural living.



RS: Is that something you have hinted at in writings such as *One Tree Among Many* and *The Hour Before Dawn*, and *It Is Dawn* which I have collected here as Appendix I?

DM: Yes, hinted at, so perhaps such very personal experiences are all that needs to be written, for to write anything else, more than briefly recounting such personal experiences, now seems to me just waffling and making unnecessary supra-personal generalizations.

RS: You have written many recent items about Christianity, such as *JS Bach: BWV 118* {11} which apparently indicate a sympathy with that religion, or more particularly with Roman Catholicism - and I'm thinking of your items such as *A Sacramental Link?*, {12} and about TS Eliot, {13} and your vignette *Yuletide 2023* {14} - so would it be right to say that you're now a Christian, again?

DM: Although I respect many aspects of that weltanschauung and especially how Roman Catholicism presenced and in some way still presences the numinous - as in pre-Gregorian chant and Gregorian chant such as that of Hildegard von Bingen; as in the mysterium that is Latin Tridentine Mass and the sacrament of Confession; and as in the allegory of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the message of The Beatitudes as I, possibly heretically, have translated them, {15} and as in his betrayal, his the suffering death - my feeling (and as often I use that word advisedly) is that I am now only my, possibly somewhat paganus, personal weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

In *The Johannine Weltanschauung* {16} written this year I expressed my concerns, past and present, regarding the acceptance by Christians of the Old Testament and of the interpretation of particular Hellenistic (κοινή) Greek words in translations of the New Testament. Which is why I would not now describe myself as a Christian.

RS: In 2020, and during the Covid 'lock-down' in Britain, you wrote: "Is this understanding - this intuition - the essence of a modern paganism? Personally I believe that it is." {17} Is that still valid?

DM: Yes, although, since we are mortal fallible beings, one never knows what events and experiences may occur to be the genesis of some future inner change.

---

The interview was conducted, via the medium of e-mail, on the eve of the Summer Solstice of 2024 CE, by RS who compiled the exchanges into the text that was converted to a pdf document; who also corrected some typos, added some punctuation for readability, and provided URL's for some of the references mentioned in the exchanges.

ooo

URL's correct as of June 2024

{1} The three articles are:

(i) *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity In The National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/davidmyatt-vindex-homo-hubris.pdf>  
(ii) the two-part *The Imagined Emotionology Of Mr Henry*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/imagined-motionology-dmyatt-parts1-and-2.pdf>

{2} The academic article is *David Myatt's Imagined Emotionology, his Striving for Authentic Aryan Emotional Communities, and the Dishonourable Wulstan Tedder*, by Clive Henry, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631180.2024.2319484>

{3} Appendix II of the third edition of *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, 115yf {2004} in respect of which date qv. footnotes {1} and {2} of *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity*, op. cit.

{4} *Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

{5} Appendix VII of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{6} *Empathy, The Hermetic Tradition, And Our Human Physis*, in *Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, op. cit.

{7} *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{8} *Almost Mid-Summer*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230606194010/https://www.davidmyatt.info/almost-midsummer.html>

{9} *Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing*, Appendix II of *Extremism And Reformation*,  
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/reformation-extremism-v3b.pdf>

{10} *Letters From An English Farm*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/davidmyatt-farm-letters.pdf>

{11} *JS Bach: BWV118*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/dwmyatt-bwv118.pdf>

{12} *A Sacramental Link*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/sacramental-link-1.pdf>

{13} *Poetry, Weltschmerz, And A learning From Experience*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/dwm-one-discovery.pdf>

{14} *Yule 2023*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/dm-2023-yule.pdf>

{15} *Gospel According To Matthew, Chapter Five, vv.1-10, A Translation And Commentary*,  
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>

{16} *The Johannine Weltanschauung*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/dwmyatt-johannine-gospel.pdf>

{17} qv. *In Middle Of The Month Of April* in Appendix I.

---

## Appendix I

### It Is Dawn

It is Dawn, breaking, in June in England as I, now an old man with three feet to guide him on his walks, {1} look out from an open window to hear the Blackbird beginning its song when the modern clock-time is around four o'clock in the morning. A song whose beginning varies as measured by such a modern human-manufactured time but whose genesis is the natural, unmeasured, rhythm of Nature. For only a month or so it was a clock-measured hour later at five o'clock.

The Dawn, here in a county of England, is a natural Dawn, when we remaining few, now or in memory, go or used to go out in all weathers, to contain the milk that our Cows, on farms, produced and which milk so many consumers in towns and cities still seemed to need or enjoy.

There was, or seemed and even now seems to me to be, a natural rhythm there, in such personal manual outdoor toil. A somewhat calmer and slower way of living that apparently has no or little place in the modern world that has evolved around us. But perhaps this is just nostalgia from a now geriatric man remembering former joys, which though sometimes forged in trying times, became for him at least the genesis of a supra-personal perspective.

David Myatt  
June 15th 2024

{1} Who with "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοῦς στείχει, παῖδός δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαΐνει. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 79-82. My translation.

---

### One Tree Among Many

Beside the stone wall that marks one of the boundaries of what has for several years been my home is an evergreen Oak; almost a dome of spreading branches and so tall it might well be an hundred or so years in age. The tallest tree around from near where several other and various and tallish specimens of arboreal life provide perches for those whose Dawn Chorus becomes, was, is, a hymnal to such natural Life as has for centuries pleased us.

Two months ago, the Oak was sad; with leaves dry and dying and infested. But now, as clouds break to reveal sky-blue, bringer of early Summer warmth: the tree has that light green of leaf rebirth, and catkins heralds of acorns an English season hence. So there is joy within as this aged man "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." {1}

Would that he might hear one more Dawn Chorus to so remember those, these, simple natural beauties of life which he as so many others so easily forgot enwrapped as he, they, were in believed in, in felt, selfish concerns which all will, must, die with us while the Sun again warms each year as it warms and life-sprouting rain seeds rebirth without any interference from us at all.

So I sit, windows of sky and trees to enlighten again my life, listening to a heartbreaking, suspended moment in my

measured out so very limited timespan of causal life: the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*.

DW Myatt  
6th June 2023

{1} τό θ' ὑπέργερων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 79-82. My translation.

---

### The Hour Before Dawn

It is the hour before Dawn on the Spring Equinox, dark outside, with the Blackbird in the tree at the edge of the garden already singing. No other sounds, as yet, and there arises within me questions I have felt several times in the past few years.

Which are: is what we in a land such as this – a modern Western land such as England as Spring dawns even within, upon, urban conurbations – have acquired, developed, manufactured over the past few hundred years worth the suffering that has been inflicted upon other human beings, upon our forebears, and upon Nature? Is that suffering the price of such societies as we have developed and now seek to maintain?

Numerous overseas conflicts; two World Wars with millions upon millions dead, injured, traumatized, and cities, towns, Nature, destroyed. Numerous invasions and wars since then. Poverty, homelessness, injustice, inequality, crime, still within our lands. Has anything in terms of our humanity, of we being self-controlled, rational, honest and honourable – of ourselves as causes and vectors of suffering – really changed?

It is not as if I am exempt from having caused suffering. My past decades long suffering-causing deeds are my burden and will be until I die.

My personal, fallible, answers born of my pathei-mathos, is that unfortunately we as individuals have not as yet *en masse* changed sufficiently so as to cease to be a cause and a vector of suffering. Tethered as we still apparently are to causal abstractions, to -isms and -ologies, and thus to denotata and the dialectic of opposites, to the conflict that such denotata is the genesis of.

Perhaps we need another hundred, two hundred, or more years. Our perhaps we will continue, *en masse*, are we mostly now are, the eventual extinction of our sometimes stable causal societies of human beings acausally inevitable, fated; until the planet we call Earth finally meets its Cosmic end as all planets do, with we human beings never making real the visionary dream of a few to venture forth and colonize the stars. And even if we did somehow realize that dream, would we venture forth as the still savage, dishonourable, war-mongering species we still are?

Yet all I have in answer, in expiation for my own past suffering-causing deeds, is my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos; {1} so insufficient in so many ways.

David Myatt  
March 2023 CE

{1} The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

---

### In Middle Of The Month Of April

In the now still warm air of an approaching English dusk, in middle of the month of April, I can hear the birdsong of a Thrush while I sit, outdoors, near a blossoming Cherry tree.

Nearby, the garden of an Inn – a Tavern, a Pub – is eerily silent because deserted. At this time of year there should be, there was for decades, the laughter, the bustling, the joy, of human beings.

Such human silence is, for me, unprecedented. Making me aware of how transient we as a terran species are on this planet we have named as Earth. Were we all to die – from some future pandemic or other – would Nature, presenced in such life as birds and trees, endure? Possibly. Probably.

Were we as a species to survive some future pandemic or other would we humans as a species learn from such a pathei-mathos and change our Nature-destroying, our unemphatic, ways? Are we capable of learning from such a pandemic as currently affects our human species?

Somehow, I doubt that we in our majority would – or even could – change our ways. Yet – and at least in my experience – there is a minority who would, who could, learn, and an even smaller minority, a pioneering few, who already if only intuitively foresaw such a Nature-born human calamity as now affects us, our societies. Foresaw, and changed their ways of life accordingly.

Perhaps, as I myself intuitively feel – listening as I now do in the burgeoning twilight to the birdsong of a Thrush near a blossoming Cherry tree – those pioneering few are or should be our future. For they are those who, with families or alone, mostly live, often in rural or wilderness areas, "off grid" and thus disconnected from modern means of communication and striving to be self-sufficient in terms of food and other essentials.

For such pioneering few there are no ideologies; no politics; no interfering desire – political or religious – to change what-is into what others passionately believe should-be. Instead, there is only their family or an individual desire to live in a more natural, a more intuitive, way with Nature, with the Cosmos. Only an awareness of how we – as individuals, as a family – are a nexion to Nature, to Earth, to the Cosmos and thus an awareness of how what we do or we do not do affects or can affect Nature, Earth, the Cosmos.

Is this understanding – this intuition – the essence of a modern paganism? Personally I believe that it is.

David Myatt  
April 2020

Source: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com>

---

Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 4.0 license

---

## A May Day Interview With David Myatt 2024



Question: Based on your wrydful life [1] how would you now describe our human condition?

Answer: Forty years of personal and practical experiences in the real world led me to conclude that we as a species do not seem to have learned from what I have termed our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos which: (i) is described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts such as *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge;

(ii) has inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama, e.g. Σοφοκλέους Οἰδίπους Τύραννος;

(iii) is expressed via non-verbal mediums such as Art and music, e.g. John Dunstable: Preco preheminencie; and

(iv) is manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' including certain films and certain documentaries such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Salt Of The Earth* by Juliano Ribeiro Salgado.

However, even now, in what is the 21st century of a certain calender, politicians and others continue to try and justify war and supra-personal armed conflict in the name of this or that manufactured causal abstraction, where there is always 'the-other' and 'we, the justified, the righteous', as is so evident in the current conflicts between Ukraine and Russia and what has happened and is happening in Gaza in which conflicts America and most NATO countries support and arm one side against the other. Which conflicts are just two current examples among so many around the world.

Moving on from such generalizations, a relevant real-life personal example is the 2008 case of Brianna Denison in Reno Nevada, with the coward responsible, rightly - in my opinion, based on my belief in personal honour [2] - sentenced to death, using the legal system to keep himself alive for over a decade. Furthermore, and insofar as I know, such personal violence happens almost every day in almost every land, in every designated modern nation, on planet Earth. Hence my assessment, in the 2023 missive *Nearly A Decade Ago* [3] that an observing alien from an extraterrestrial world would conclude that we are an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate otherwise".

In addition, as I wrote in that missive, "I was and am painfully aware of my own, decades-long, past of violence, extremism, conflict, intolerance, hatred, incitement, and selfishness," asking "whether my own fallible learning from experience and attempt at expiation, as manifest in my individualistic weltanschauung of pathei-mathos" has any meaning or relevance external to myself. [4]

It does not seem so, with even the answers of long-established religions and ways of life, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Taoism, while having helped over millennia to reduce suffering through individual awareness of the numinous not having prevented individuals and nations from perpetuating, year after year, decade after decade, the cycle of human-inflicted suffering.

Why not prevented? Partly because of the vexatious problem of exegesis since all politics and most established religions and religious ways of life depend on denotata and thus on causal abstractions and on how such denotata are interpreted. Which interpretations can and do vary from political faction to political faction, from one political party to another, from one manifesto to another. While in the matter of religion, on interpretation of texts from decade to decade, from century to century, and which variations and disputations often led to conflict, schisms, persecution, and accusations of heresy as "in the case of the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεός and the denotatum ὁ θεός in, for instance the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical." [5]

Q: How, then, do you understand our future?

A: As a necessary and personal disengagement from denotata, from causal abstractions and from exegesis, to the very

personal perceivration that empathy provides. For,

"The numinous way - the philosophy - of pathei-mathos is based on four principles: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is [denotata] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that [denotata] and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth." [6]

Which disengagement will probably be very slow and over centuries, if it occurs at all on the scale necessary to reform, evolve, our human physis. For such disengagement is the lesson of our thousands of year old human culture of pathei-mathos.

For the learning has been and is that empathy and pathei-mathos are always directly personal perceivations and experiences, and thus have a 'personal horizon' meaning that they cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation.

But it seems that our current societies, at least in the West, incline so many from necessity or personal choice to not have the time, the means, the inclination to disengage from the temporal modern world to thus either spend months alone or with a loved one or with their family in some wilderness or remote rural area for weeks, months, on end, or to begin a new life in such areas.

Q: So you are pessimistic about the future?

A: I am neither pessimistic nor optimistic. It is what it is and what it may well be. As TS Eliot beautifully expressed it in his Ash Wednesday poem:

Because I know that time is always time  
And place is always and only place  
And what is actual is actual only for one time  
And only for one place  
I rejoice that things are as they are and  
I renounce the blessed face  
And renounce the voice  
Because I cannot hope to turn again  
Consequently I rejoice, having to construct something  
Upon which to rejoice  
And pray to God to have mercy upon us  
And pray that I may forget  
These matters that with myself I too much discuss  
Too much explain  
Because I do not hope to turn again  
Let these words answer  
For what is done, not to be done again  
May the judgement not be too heavy upon us

For me, now, that 'God' of his and of others is Being, ὁ θεός, The Ineffable, The Unknowing and Unknowable, The Acausal, The-Unity, The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), The Monas (μονάς) and which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God.

This Being is also, as described in the Corpus Hermeticum, both male-and-female:

Theos, the perceivration, male-and-female [ἀρρενόθηλυσ] being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivration, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυσ ὢν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὢν, ἐδημιούργησε διοικητὰς τινὰς ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται. [7]

Q: What then do you understand by 'pray' since TS Eliot's phrase

And pray that I may forget  
These matters that with myself I too much discuss

seems appropriate to describe what you wrote in 2014:

"My writings, post-2011, were and are really dialogues: interiorly with myself and externally with a few friends or the occasional person who has contacted me and expressed an interest." [8]

A: I understand prayer now in a contemplative way, sans words spoken aloud or unvoiced or read. Through, for instance, a listening to such music as provides a personal awareness of the numinous as for me in the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*; [9] in Dunstable's *Preco prehemencie*, in the *Super Flumina Babylonis* of Phillipe de Monte, in JS Bach's *Aria Ich habe genug* BWV 82, and many other pieces of 'classical' music.

But especially and primarily in a contemplation of Nature through for instance solitary silent manual outdoor work where there is a wordless awareness; or where one, again alone, is still and silent, and senses, feels, one's rural surroundings in a manner I attempted to describe in some letters I once wrote from which letters these are two extracts:

"There is a lovely, simple, pleasure here in this field. Spring is most certainly here: in the meadow fields, seedlings of the late Spring flowers push up through the tufts of grass whose frost-bitten ends are joined by shoots of new growth. Already some flowers bloom in the grass: there, a Dandelion; there: almost two circles of Daisies. And, to compliment the calls and songs of other birds, the loud repeating call of the *Parus major*.

It is good to be here, with an unobstructed view of the sky, and I watch the clouds, borne as they are on a still cool breeze that begins to chill my hands, a little. But there is Sun, warm, when the altocumulus breaks. On the horizon in the North, beyond the tall old Oak, small Cumulus clouds drift toward the hills, ten miles distant.

Thus am I again - for these moments - at peace with myself, this world, listening as I do to a large flock of Starlings who chatter among themselves in the trees across from the drainage ditch, there by the copse of Ash, Oak, and a few young Beech [...]

Work, yes there must be work: toil enough to keep that balance. And work with these my hands, outdoors where lives the silence that I love as I feel the weather, changing, bringing thus an empathic living for me, in me, and for this life that lives around, emanating as it does in this grass, those trees, the clouds, the soil, the water, those flowers, the very sky itself." [10]

"A glorious warm day of full, hot, Sun and I after work lying in the warm still growing greening grass by the edge of one field at the back of the Farm - sometimes asleep - for what is probably an hour [...]

Beneath and around the old tall Oak, acorns have fallen, eaten or stored, or both, by Squirrels, for I can find and see only the top which once held them on the tree. The small pond with its incumbent still living branches, is smaller, greener now, home to algae and slime, and the large Dragonfly hovers above the greenish water, to fly around to return to hover. A fly - or something, for I cannot quite see from here - passes it by and the Dragonfly darts around, chasing it away from the water. It is a chase, for I see this happen twice, three times. Then the Dragonfly is gone, toward the bushes, the branches. In the field, a single tall Cornflower amid the yellow buttercups, the purple Clover, the Vetchling and Hawksbeard. Field-walking, I can see the Church in the two-mile distant village whose bell I can hear, here, come Sunday morning. And now, at last, I am here in the neglected one-acre strip whose fruit-giving, flowering hedges have been untrimmed for years [...]

I have no land, no field or fields, to call my own where I can tend and care as life, field-grown, field-sown, field-fare, should be tended with care born from dwelling, feeling, there. I only work, toiling, for another, to keep me fed, housed, clothed, tired and, sometimes, content, as now where two small brown butterflies spiral and dance around the greening growing grass where I have sat to sit crossed legged writing this, chewing on a sweet stalk of grass. So warm the Sun I can forget what should-be in the what-is of warmth: in the gentle music of leaves, breeze-brought. A few small cumulus clouds drift West to East over the nearby wooded hill, and I know, sense, feel, that here in this field, under this Sun, is Paradise." [10]

Q: But what then can be done for others in your land and in other lands to make their lives better?

A: My fallible conclusion now is that it can only be individual, through personal example, personal honour, and/or by what we feel we can or perhaps need to express by adding to our human culture of *pathei-mathos* through some medium such as poetry, music, Art, autobiographical writings, drama, scholarly research, and so on.

Q: Finally, in an interview in August of 2022 you were asked the following question: "[since] your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?"

To which you replied:

"No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given



my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

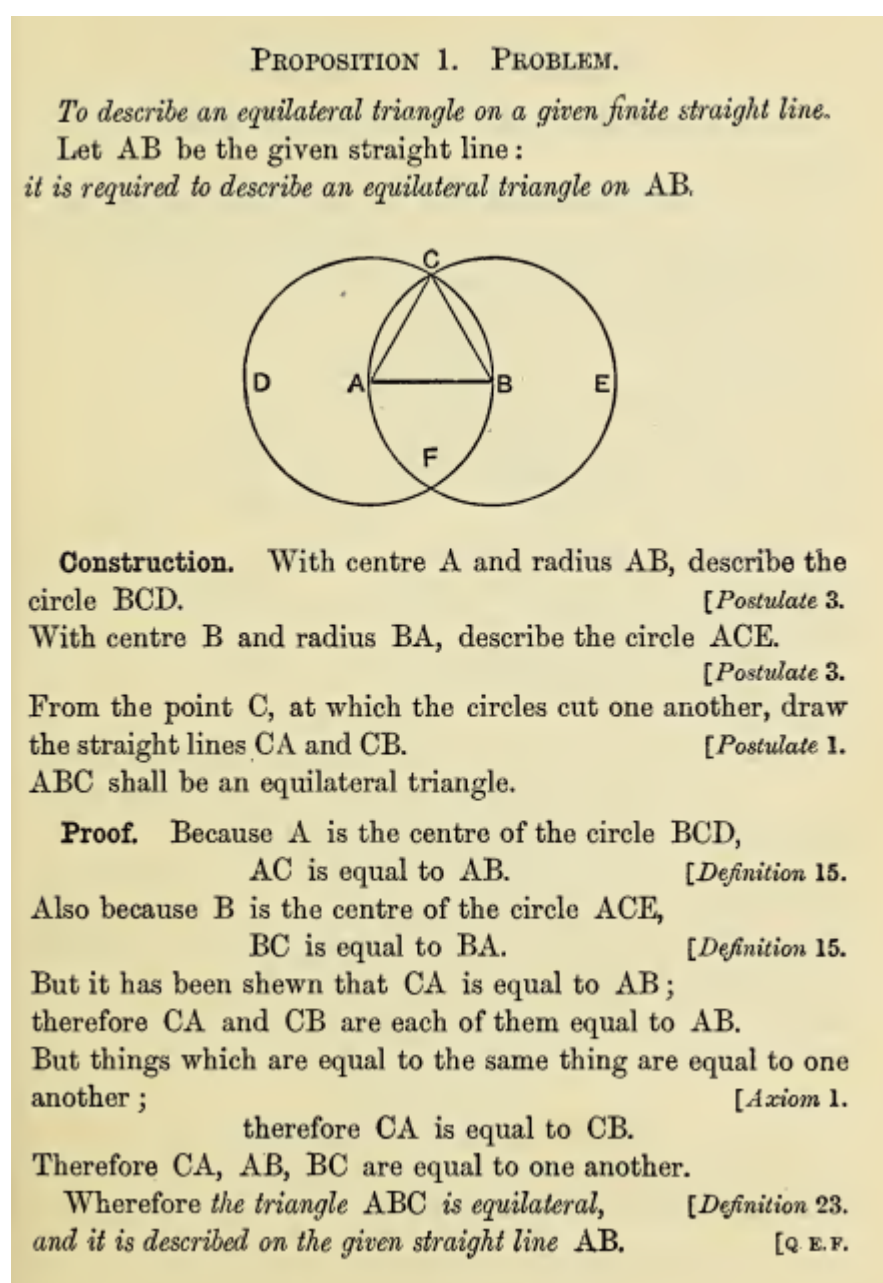
They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing." [11]

My question now is whether you have anything to add.

A: Only that, and to paraphrase what someone wrote in March 2024, it does not surprise me how many individuals in our modern world:

§ seem to lack the ability to use logical reasoning when writing about or discussing a subject;  
§ do not research a subject for themselves using scholarly methodology and primary sources;  
§ commit fallacies of reasoning such as appeal to authority and ad populum;  
§ use an Internet resource such as 'wikipedia' as a source of information about a subject even though it is a tertiary source and thus is based on interpretive secondary sources. [12]

Perhaps if they had received in their youth a 'classical education', a learning of Ancient Greek, Latin, and a study of works such as *Hermeneutica Analytica Elenctica* and Euclid's Στοιχεῖα, they would not commit such errors. Personally, I well remember the joy I had as a schoolboy in reading the set text *The Elements of Euclid For The Use of Schools and Colleges*, and in solving the geometrical problems we were given based on that text.



ooo

v. 1. 04. The interview was conducted via the medium of e-mail by Rachael Stirling and has been slightly edited for publication.

ooo

[1] The 46-page monograph *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist* provides an overview.  
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2021/12/11/a-national-socialist-ideologue/>

[2] An extract from *Honour, The Numinous Balance* is included in Appendix I.

[3] Included as Appendix II.

[4] Note by DM: Personally, I have a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware of how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to



appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond.

Thus such sacred music has become, for me, redolent of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred supra-personal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos.

[5] *Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/exegesis-pathei-mathos-v1.pdf>

[6] *Physis And Being in The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[7] Poemandres, v.9; qv. *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

[8] *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf>

[9] qv. *One Tree Among Many*, included as Appendix IV.

[10] *Letters From A Farm*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/dwmyatt-farm-letters.pdf>

[11] The interview is included in *An Uncertitude Of Knowing: Four Interviews*, ISBN 9798394746574

[12] *Some Signs Of Our Era*, <https://archive.org/download/signs-of-modern-era/signs-of-modern-era.pdf>

ooo

Image Credit:

NASA – Earth and Moon as seen from the departing Voyager 1 interplanetary spacecraft

---

## Appendix I

### Honour - The Numinous Balance

The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are – together – a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχὴ – of Life, of our φύσις – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack.

Extract from

The Numinous Balance of Honour,

<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

---

## Appendix II

### Nearly A Decade Ago

Nearly a decade ago I considered a particular question: what opinion would a hypothetical visiting alien from another star-system form about us? [1] My answer was that the alien would consider us an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate otherwise.

Subsequent to that I pondered four related questions. First, is there any land on planet Earth, any of what are now called countries and nations, that over the past three thousand years that has not been fought over or subject to the clash of opposed armed violent groups of mostly men? Second, how many countries or lands now, for whatever reason or because of whatever excuse or whatever supra-personal causal abstraction, are not the subject of some armed conflict domestic or foreign? Third, how many countries are still plagued by homicides, robbery, theft, fraud, rape, domestic violence, subsuming hatred, poverty, dishonesty, and corruption political or otherwise? Fourth, have we as a supposedly consciously-aware species capable of reason and of honour [2] learnt anything from thousands upon thousands of years of such conflict, hatred, and such violence personal and impersonal?

In seeking answers to such questions I was and am painfully aware of my own, decades-long, past of violence, extremism, conflict, intolerance, hatred, incitement, and selfishness. Of whether my own fallible 'learning from experience' and attempt at expiation, as manifest in my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, [3] has any meaning or relevance external to myself.

But that weltanschauung is all I have in answer. The answer of a personal, a non-interfering, empathy, compassion, humility, and of a personal honour in the immediacy of a living moment. [4]

Will we, can we, as a species change? Evolve away from the violence, the mistakes, the hatreds, the dishonours, of our past and of our present?

David Myatt  
July 2023

[1] Included as Appendix III..

[2] Sophocles, *Antigone*, v. 334 & vv. 365-366:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδ' ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ δεινότερον πέλε [...]  
σοφόν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being [...]  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts – he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[3] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] An extract from *Honour, The Numinous Balance* is included in Appendix I.

---

## Appendix III

### A Non-Terrestrial View Of Planet Earth

Several times, in the last decade or so, I have – when considering certain current events, and social change, and the activities, policies, and speeches, of certain politicians – often asked myself a particular question: What impression or what conclusions would a non-terran (a hypothetical visiting alien from another star-system) have of or draw from those events, such social change, and those politicians? And what, therefore, would be the conclusions that such a non-terran would make regarding our nature, our human character, as a species?

Which answers seemed to me to depend on what criteria – ethical, experiential, ontological, and otherwise – such a non-terran might employ. Would, for instance, the home-world of such a non-terran be a place of relative peace and prosperity which, having endured millennia of conflict and war, had evolved beyond conflict and war and had also ended poverty? Would, for instance, such a non-terran view matters dispassionately, having evolved such that they are always able to control – or have developed beyond – such strong personal emotions as now, as for all of our human history, so often still seem to overwhelm we humans leading us and having led us to be selfish, to lie, to cheat, to manipulate, to use violence – and sometimes kill – in order to fulfil a personal desire?

The criteria I now (post-2011) apply to this hypothetical scenario are those derived from my own experience, and from

reflecting over several years upon that experience, which criteria are of course subjective, personal, and it is thus no coincidence that they now are reflected in my philosophy of pathei-mathos. Thus the ethics I assume such an interstellar space-faring sentient non-terran might adhere to are based on honour and the apprehension of suffering and hubris that empathy provides; just as the ontology derives from a numinous awareness of how causal and fallible and transient every sentient life is in respect of the vastness of the cosmos (spatially and in terms of aeons of causal time), with such ethics and ontology a natural consequence of such a culture whose genesis is that pathei-mathos – ancestral, individual, societal – that derives from millennia of suffering, conflict, war, poverty, corruption, and oppression.

Furthermore, my reflexion on the past fifty years of human space exploration leads me to further conclude that we as a species – and perhaps every sentient species – can only venture forth, en masse, to explore and colonize new worlds when certain social and political conditions exist: when we, when perhaps every sentient species, have matured sufficiently to be able to, as individuals, control ourselves (without any internal or external coercion deriving from laws or from some belief be such belief ideological, political, or religious) and thus when we use reason and empathy as our *raison d'être* and not our emotions, our desires, our egoism or some -ism or some -ology or some faith that we accept or believe in or need. For despite the technology making such space exploration and colonization now feasible for us (if only currently within our solar system) we lack the political will, the social desire, the trans-national cooperation, the vision, to realize it even given that our own habitable planet is slowly undergoing a transformation for the worse wrought by ourselves. All we have – decades after the landings on the Moon – are a few individuals inhabiting and only for a while just one Earth-orbiting space station and a few small-scale, theorized, human landings on Mars a decade or more in the future. For instead of such a vision of a new frontier which frontier a multitude of families can settle and which can be the genesis of new cultures and new human societies, all we have had in the past fifty years is more of the same: regional wars and armed conflicts; invasions, violent coups and revolutions; violent protests, the killing and imprisonment and torture of protestors and dissenters; political propaganda for this political cause or that; exploitation of resources and of other humans; terrorism, murder, rape, theft, and greed.

How then would my hypothetical space-faring alien judge us as a species, and how would such a non-terran view such squabbles – political, social, ideological, religious, and be they violent or non-violent – and such poverty, inequality, and oppression, as still seem to so bedevil almost all societies currently existing on planet Earth?

In addition, how would we as individuals – and how would our governments – interact with, and treat, such an alien were such an alien, visiting Earth incognito, to be discovered? Would we treat such an alien with respect, with honour:

as a non-threatening ambassador from another world? Would any current government on Earth willingly and openly and world-wide acknowledge the existence of such extra-terrestrial life and allow Earth ambassadors from any country, and scientists, and the media, full and open access to such an alien sentient being? I have my own personal intuition regarding answers to such questions.

But, remaining undiscovered, what would our visiting alien observer report regarding Earth and ourselves on their return to their own planet? Again, I have my own personal intuition regarding answers to such questions. Which answers could well be that we are an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate – through perhaps having numerous peaceful, cooperating, colonies on other worlds – that we have culturally and personally, in moral terms, advanced.

Which rather – to me at least – places certain current events, social change by -isms, by -ologies, through disruption and violence and via revolution, and the activities, policies, and speeches, of certain politicians, and armed conflicts, into what I intuit is a necessary cosmic, non-terran, perspective. Which perspective is of us as a species still evolving; as having the potential and now the means to further and to consciously, and as individuals, to so evolve.

Will we do this? And how? Again, my answer – fallible as it is, repeated by me as it hereby is, and born as it is from my own pathei-mathos – is that it could well begin with us as individuals consciously deciding to change through cultivating empathy and viewing ourselves and our world in the perspective of the cosmos. Which perspective is of our smallness, our fallibility, our mortality, and of our appreciation of the numinous and thus of the need to avoid the error of hubris; an error which we mortals, millennia following millennia, have always made and which even now – even with our ancestral world-wide culture of pathei-mathos – we still commit day after day, year after year, and century after century, enshrined as such hubris seems to be in so many politicians; in -isms and -ologies; in disruptive and violent social change and revolutions; in armed conflicts, and in our very physis as human individuals: an apparently unchanged physis which so motivates so many of us to still be egoistic, to lie, to cheat, to steal, to murder, to manipulate, to be violent, and to often be motivated by avarice, pride, jealousy, and a selfish sexual desire.

As someone, over one and half-thousand years ago, wrote regarding human beings:

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἰμι, τῷ τιμωρῷ ἐκχωρήσας δαίμονι, ὅστις τὴν ὀξύτητα τοῦ πυρὸς προσβάλλων θρώσκει αὐτὸν αἰσθητικῶς καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τὰς ἀνομίας αὐτὸν ὀπλίζει, ἵνα τύχῃ πλείονος τιμωρίας, καὶ οὐ παύεται ἐπ' ὀρέξεις ἀπλὲς τοὺς τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων, ἀκορέστως σκοτομαχῶν, καὶ τοῦ τον βασανίζει, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὸν πῦρ ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖον αὐξάνει

"I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness –

which tests them – and thus increase that fire even more." [1]

Which is basically the same understanding that Aeschylus revealed in his Oresteia trilogy many centuries before: the wisdom of pathei-mathos and the numinous pagan allegory of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [2], and which wisdom was also described by Milton over a millennia later by means of another allegory:

The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,  
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived  
The mother of mankind.

David Myatt  
2015

Extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

ooo

[1] *Poemandres*, 23. Translated by DWM in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017. Included in *Alchemy And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

[2] Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6, Translated by DM.

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.  
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?  
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

---

#### Appendix IV

##### One Tree Among Many

Beside the stone wall that marks one of the boundaries of what has for several years been my home is an evergreen Oak; almost a dome of spreading branches and so tall it might well be an hundred or so years in age. The tallest tree around from near where several other and various and tallish specimens of arboreal life provide perches for those whose Dawn Chorus becomes, was, is, a hymnal to such natural Life as has for centuries pleased us.

Two months ago, the Oak was sad; with leaves dry and dying and infested. But now, as clouds break to reveal sky-blue, bringer of early Summer warmth: the tree has that light green of leaf rebirth, and catkins heralds of acorns an English season hence. So there is joy within as this aged man "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." [1]

Would that he might hear one more Dawn Chorus to so remember those, these, simple natural beauties of life which he as so many others so easily forgot enwrapped as he, they, were in believed in, in felt, selfish concerns which all will, must, die with us while the Sun again warms each year as it warms and life-sprouting rain seeds rebirth without any interference from us at all.

So I sit, windows of sky and trees to enlighten again my life, listening to a heartbreaking, suspended moment in my measured out so very limited timespan of causal life: the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*.

DW Myatt  
6th June 2023

[1] τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 79-82. My translation.

## David Myatt: An Uncertainty Of Knowing

- Some Questions For DWM
- Myatt's Uncertainty Of Knowing
- David Myatt And The Pinch of Destiny
- Addendum: Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos
- Australian Interview
- Addendum: Analysing National Socialism

Between March 2022 and March 2023 David Myatt gave four interviews each one of which was informative about his philosophy of pathei mathos, his life experiences, about extremism, and about his current views. Together they provide a fairly comprehensive understanding of not only Myatt himself but also of his philosophy, or weltanschauung as he prefers to call it.

In addition to these interviews we include (i) the June 2022 text *Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* which provides an insightful overview of his philosophy, and (ii) Myatt's 2012 text *Analysing National Socialism* where he explains why his post-2010 philosophy is contrary to and incompatible with National Socialism.

---

### Some Questions For DWM

#### Spring 2022

In the Numinous Expiation chapter of your *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* [1] you wrote that

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done,"

and that you did not "know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation."

Since that was written twenty years ago are you still troubled and have your views changed in regard to personally not seeking propitiation through a religion such as Christianity?

Yes, I am still troubled, burdened, by my extremist past and the suffering I caused by believing in, agitating for and propagandizing on behalf of the ideology of National Socialism and a particular interpretation of Islam.

For me, the source of such a burden is two-fold: how can I, and perhaps others, not cause suffering; and for me at least there is not and probably never can be any expiation, any reparation made.

The only answer I have now, as then, is an attempt to live in "a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life."

Have I succeeded? I cannot presume to answer.

Which brings me to my next question. Some of your former political opponents do not believe what one socialist called your "change of heart". [2]

Hence they claim you are still a neo-nazi; that what you write and have written since 2010 such as your autobiography should be treated with suspicion and not taken seriously; that unless you come out in public to attend some sort of 'media circus' and directly answer their questions, they will never believe you; and that you are so concerned about your reputation that you continually search 'social media' sites and anonymously try to not only engage with them but try to cover-up your past.

How do you react to such claims?

φημί ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν· [3]

Such a seeking to apprehend such things is what now and for the past twenty or so years has occupied me.

As for trying to cover-up my past almost everything I wrote during my neo-nazi decades and my decade as a Muslim is archived somewhere. In the case of my neo-nazi decades by what used to be called 'Special Branch' as I learned following my arrest by them in 1998, and also archived on the 'world-wide web'. In the case of my decade as a Muslim an archive of my Muslim writings also exists on the 'worldwide web'. [4]

Therefore, any attempt by me or by anyone to 'cover-up' my past would be pointless. In addition, I have no desire whatsoever to do so since what exists documents my mistakes, failings, extremism, and arrogance which I want those who may be interested to know, and which acknowledgment of my past by me led to that 'change of heart'. One person has used such archives to document my extremism and the weltanschauung I developed after my rejection of

that extremism. [5]

As for what they or others claim or believe about me now and the past, it is their burden howsoever brought-into-being, howsoever nurtured and howsoever it might be described by them or by others.

Occupied by the aforementioned seeking, I am now too near death, too wearied by my own hubris and acknowledgment of it, too saddened by how so much suffering is still caused despite our human culture of pathei-mathos, to be concerned about what others claim or believe about me let alone try to change anyone's beliefs or attitudes by engaging with them in whatever way.

In a compilation published in 2019 containing some earlier essays of yours about race and extremism and which compilation complemented your 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* [6] you wrote:

"the personal fault of extremists seems to be that of being unable and/or unwilling to view, to consider, the good that exists in people, in society, and/or of ignoring the potential for good, or change toward the good, which is within people, within society, within what-is. To prefer the dream in their head to reality; and/or to prefer the struggle, the strife, the conflict, to stability and peace; and/or to need or to desire repeated stimulation/excitement. One cause of such things could, in my view - from my experience - be the inability or the unwillingness of a person, an extremist, to develop and use their own individual judgement, as well as the inability or the unwillingness to take individual, moral, responsibility for their actions and for the effects those actions personally have upon people." [7]

Is that and what follows about 'the good of society' and about what you term The Uncertainty of Knowing a reasonable summary of your understanding of extremism and of your past, and are you dismayed that such personal reflections are ignored?

That essay and my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* are indeed a reasonable summary, and which understanding was the genesis of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

But as I wrote in *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*,

"My conclusions regarding extremism resulted from some years of moral, personal, and philosophical questioning and reflexion; a questioning whose genesis was a personal tragedy in 2006, and which questioning led me a few years later to reject all forms of extremism and develop my own weltanschauung - the philosophy of pathei-mathos - based on the virtues of empathy, compassion, and humility.

I make no claim concerning the originality, or concerning the correctness or the value or the importance of my conclusions about extremism. They are just my personal, and fallible, conclusions which - given my extremist past - may interest, or be of some use to, some people; and, being such personal conclusions, they are neither presented in an academic way nor are comparisons made with the work and the conclusions (academic or otherwise) of others about extremism."

Similarly, my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology.

One of the causes of suffering is of course what is now termed 'extremism' be it personal, of one's character, or ideological or religious or political or social.

As for such writings being ignored, no, I am not dismayed only sadly resigned as an old man to what appears to me to be the current reality of the unchanged perhaps unchangeable physis of some human beings "despite our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos". Yet, and perhaps naively, I still nurture a slight hope that we mortals here on Earth can change in sufficient numbers toward being compassionate, empathic, and honourable and thus reduce the suffering we cause to other beings, human and otherwise.

In a 2017 monograph you wrote about καλὸς κάγαθός in a manner which some readers found controversial given you seemed not only to be suggesting some sort of new aristocracy but also some kind of new European style paganism. One striking passage is:

"[W]e are, ontologically, emanations of and presence Being, and are a connexion to the cosmos - to other presencings of Being - through, in terms of epistemology, not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess ἀρετή, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character." [8]

Were you suggesting a new aristocracy and a new pagan religion?

I was suggesting, evidently not very well, that "the sophia, the sapientia, of theos is presented not in the 'word of God' (scriptures) but in the personal Greek virtues of τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, and in the metaphysical principle denoted by the term αἰών," [9] and thus that those who conduct themselves in an old-fashioned gentlemanly or lady-like manner manifest an aspect of the numinous that was anciently described as "the sophia, the sapientia, of theos" [10] and that combined with empathy - manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance - that this could lead to a new non-theological awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous. One which being personal is non-doctrinal but akin to some ancient pagan weltanschauungen that existed for millennia in some Western lands as well as in other places around the world.

I summarized this non-theological awareness as

"we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin, the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies."

In another monograph I also suggested that

"an aspect of the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous, of καλὸς κἀγαθός, is a [Ciceronian] awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnipotent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do." [11]

What are these civic duties and responsibilities? To a State, or nation, or as in Greece to a πόλις or as in Rome to a Caesar?

This is a subject I really should have written about in that monograph and it was remiss of me not to have done so. My mistaken assumption at the time was that readers would be aware of my previous writings about how my weltanschauung dealt with what I termed supra-personal abstractions or 'forms' such as the State and the nation. As in Parts Two, Three and Four of *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. [1]

In Part Three of that work I wrote that

"[i]n the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad.

For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political, or codified ideologically or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years."

In Part Four I compared the answers of conventional religions and proponents of The State, writing that

"[i]n respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings, an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet."

I went on to write that this

"alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei,"

with wu-wei a Taoist term

"used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous."

All of which implies, with one important exception, non-violence. The exception being the matter of personal honour in the immediacy of the moment when an individual is confronted with someone or some many who are intent on harming or bullying that individual or someone or some others nearby. The person of honour would defend themselves, with force if necessary, as they would when defending those being harmed or bullied.

Your writings about your philosophy have been described as making "inscrutably dense arguments." Is there a work of yours you would recommend for those interested in your philosophy of pathei-mathos? Finally what is your opinion of the book titled *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, a third edition of which was published in 2021?

A short introduction is my 2019 essay *Physis and Being* [12] with my 2022 text *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition* providing a more detailed perspective. [13] The third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt* [14] is a reasonably comprehensive overview.

May 2022

[1] *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

[2] <https://web.archive.org/web/20121214002444/http://hurryupharry.org/2012/12/11/david-myatt-has-a-change-of-heart/>

[3] Poemandres, 3. "I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[4] <https://web.archive.org/web/20101111104858/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

[5] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2021/12/11/a-national-socialist-ideologue/>

[6] *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[7] *Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate in Extremism And Reformation*. 2019. Third Edition. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/reformation-extremism-v3b.pdf>

[8] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf>

[9] Chapter Three, *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. Op.cit.

[10] The MSS of Tractate XI:3, *Corpus Hermeticum*, reads:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἐστι;  
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.

But the Sophia of theos is what?  
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion.

[11] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*. 2017. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

[12] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/collected-works-2/physis-and-being/>

[13] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

[14] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

---



## Myatt's Uncertainty Of Knowing

Summer 2022

A transcription of an interview conducted and recorded by Rachael Stirling in England in early August 2022.

ooo

Rachael Stirling: We have been perusing an archive of your writings as a Muslim {1} which in retrospect make fascinating reading because you presented Islam in a way it is not often presented in English in the societies of the modern West. Are you embarrassed that those writings are still so easily accessible given that you have moved on?

DM: No, since they document an interesting and in terms of pathos an important ten years of my life.

RS: Our three part question is in relation to exegesis and what you wrote about it in Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions {2} and what you wrote years earlier, as a Muslim, in The Difference Between Eemaan and Kufr,

"in Islam, we have the best example of a human being - the Prophet, Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) - to strive to emulate and follow, and which human example, when followed, produces in us a most noble, a most civilized, individual character. This best example, this noble and human way, is evident to us in Seerah, in Ahadith: in the Sunnah of the Prophet, Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) [...]

The simple but profound truth about Al-Islam is that this Way of Life, this Deen, works: for Al-Quran and the Sunnah, when followed, produce, and have produced, noble, honourable, civilized human beings, and they, and the guidance of Shariah, produce, and have produced, the most noble, the most civilized, communities in human history.

In essence, Al-Islam is the simple way of - the discovery of, the return to - Tawheed, which is to know, to feel, to remember, our correct relationship with and to Allah, our Creator and thus to know Allah as Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is. This knowing of The Unity, The Oneness, of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is expressed in Kalimaah Tayyibah - La ilaaha illallaahu Muhammadur rasoolullaah - which itself forms the basis for Kalimaah Shahadah, the declaration that makes one a Muslim, and which re-affirms one's Islam: that simple submission to submit to and to only obey Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala and that knowing that Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is the Prophet and Messenger of Allah, whose message, whose Allah-given revelation (Al-Quran) and whose life (Sunnah) are the guidelines, the means, by which we can return to, and know, Tawheed.

This knowing of, this remembrance of, this feeling of, Tawheed is the basis for Eemaan, for that simple and total reliance on, and belief in and trust of, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala."

Would it be correct to suggest: i) that in many ways this echoes, with its mention of noble, civilized communities and its belief in trusting a person, what you wrote during your National Socialist years regarding Hitler and National Socialism; and (ii) that you believed you had discovered in Islam a means to creating a noble way of life as you formerly did in National Socialism; and (iii) that it was "the difficult question of exegesis" that began or at least contributed to your doubts about Islam?

DM: To some extent, yes that is correct, since it was practical experience over many years of the human reality, manifest in those who adhered to, or believed in, or supported such weltanschauungen, that caused me to begin to reflect upon not only questions of various interpretations of texts and words but also on questions in regard to denotata, the fallible nature of humans in general, and how if not immediately then over causal Time most if not all denotata were the genesis of an opposite and thus of a dialectic.

Thus, in regard to National Socialism my experience was of how my believed in version based on honour, loyalty and duty and thus as a manifestation of the numinous, was not the reality of perhaps a majority of persons who described themselves as National Socialists, and that even in the days of the Third Reich it had been so, mirroring as this seemed to do our propensity as human beings to in our majority so easily be or revert to being egoistical or materialistic when and if it suited us.

With Islam, I initially apprehended it as different, as a better manifestation of the numinous, just as I did in regard to Catholicism when I became a Christian monk. But suffice to say that my Muslim adventures over a period of almost a decade not only disillusioned me but forced me to confront my own flawed character and lack of understanding.

For it was not just that as an adult I was naively idealistic but also I did not understand the reality of what honour meant resulting in me both as a National Socialist and as a Muslim supporting and doing dishonourable deeds.

Which realization and awareness of my own flawed character was not due to anything I did or due to the aforementioned intellectual questioning, but due to a personal circumstance which was both tragic and beyond my comprehension: the suicide in 2006 of my then fiancée.

In the months following that tragedy such intellectual questioning became one of several means by which I sought to understand myself, the numinous, and honour, and thus that tragedy.

RS: In relation to not understanding "the reality of what honour meant." In many of your Islamic writings you mentioned honour and in Honour Is From Allah Alone quoted a verse from the Koran: "Those who seek dignity and honour should know that they derive from Allah (alone)," 35:10. In the same article you quoted a Hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari (8: 56b) which translates as "the best among you are those who have the best manners and character."

In your *An Open Letter To Nick Griffin of the BNP* - dated July 17th 2004 - you described honour as "a respect for others; a striving to be reasonable. Honour sets ethical limits to our behaviour - and prejudice, of whatever kind, is surely a negation of honour."

How after that tragedy did you arrive, if indeed you did arrive, at what honour thereafter meant to you?

DM: My fallible conclusion, some three years after that tragedy, was that I had previously, both as a National Socialist and as a Muslim, not considered honour as a denotatum; as a naming of some personal quality or personal virtue, such as dignity, grace, of good repute, which themselves are open to interpretation. In my National Socialist years I defined it by a written or aural code of personal behaviour such as described in the sixteenth century Booke of Honor and Armes. or by the modern one I included in my *The Meaning of National-Socialism*. {3} As a Muslim I considered it a gift from Allah and manifest in the life of the Prophet Muhammed as described in the Sunnah.

What I very slowly came to appreciate was that every denotatum has implicit in it or developes - is by virtue of its physis the genesis of - a named opposite, another denotatum, resulting in a dialectic and thus has the potential for discord; a discord evident in exegesis but more often than not evident in conflict, verbal and physical, between individuals and groups of individuals. The result is as Heraclitus expressed it a cleaving of physis with Enantiodromia a bringing-back-together of what has been cleaved apart:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται (Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz)

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix.7) {4}

My understanding came to be that Enantiodromia was, or rather should be understood and appreciated as, empathy; the wordless-knowing of empathy by which we could perceive the physis of beings, their wholeness, without the need for denotata and the discord that denotata was the genesis of.

Given the personal horizon of empathy, the personal nature of empathy, {5} I considered that honour could not be understood by some supra-personal code or by reference to someone else be the reference to their life, their deeds, or their words. That it could not

"be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {6}

That is, I discovered that empathy is or can be the geniture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings and thus of that personal humility which during my Muslim years I had felt, through such things as Namaz, was a manifestation of the numinous.

Honour thus became, for me, a personal matter: of being fair, reasonable, well-mannered, and aware of the numinous and thus of my own fallibility.

RS:

Hence your rejection of all extremism?

DM: Yes.

RS: Yet your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing.

RS: One of your politically motivated opponents recently claimed that "nothing in Myatt's sanitized autobiography [Myngath] should be taken too seriously," {7} while a few years ago another stated that he knew what was in the original draft of Myngath and knew what was removed in the published, 2013, version, stating that you thereby had

tried to hide something.

Would you care to comment?

DM: The opinion or claim of someone - politically motivated or otherwise - is just their personal opinion or claim at a particular moment. The passing of causal Time - decades, centuries - often places such personal opinions and claims into context often because of some information having become revealed through scholarly research or otherwise, or because of the collapse of the society in which such a personal opinion or claim was propagated and believed by others.

As for drafts of Myngath, so far as I remember the first drafts were made around 2010 while I was still in thrall to some causal abstractions and several years before I as a result of further personal and philosophical insights reformed my 'Numinous Way' into my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos. For such drafts were just drafts, and thus subject to revision. Furthermore, those early drafts are still publicly available through the medium of the Internet, so there is not and was not any hiding of anything.

RS: In a ten page overview of your life, which overview contained some inaccuracies, {8} an academic last year wrote that you were "driven by a search for meaning and purpose, as well as an intellectual desire to find and create the all-encompassing and perfect political philosophy."

Would you agree?

DM: No, because during my National-Socialist decades I was driven by a somewhat fanatical desire to not only propagate what I then believed National-Socialism to be - an honourable, noble, way of life, a practical presencing of the numinous - but also to recruit people to that cause in the hope of creating a National-Socialist society in the land of my ancestors. Over those years I developed what I termed "ethical National-Socialism" and thus moved away from some of the policies and principles of the Third Reich such as the belief in the superiority of the Aryan race and the concepts of "eternal struggle" and of the "survival of the fittest" regarding them as incompatible with acting honourably.

During my years as a Muslim I nurtured a similar desire to propagate what I then believed the Muslim way of life to be: which again was an honourable, noble, way of life, and a practical presencing of the numinous.

There was thus no search for "meaning and purpose" because I foolishly believed I had already found a meaning and a purpose: for thirty years in National-Socialism and then for ten years in Islam. In 1998 I turned away from National-Socialism to Islam because during a decade (1988-1998) of foreign travels the culture, the Muslims, of the Muslim lands - and especially of Egypt - slowly, almost imperceptibly, impressed me as did, and perhaps more so, travels alone in the Sahara Desert where I wordlessly felt intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἕν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God.

As for a "perfect political philosophy", I never believed my ethical National-Socialism - my development of Hitler's National Socialism - was perfect, and as a Muslim rejected the very notion of politics, writing in The Knowledge of Islam,

"Siyasah is defined as the application of the Quran and Sunnah in the world: the means whereby Muslims can live in a community according to the command of Allah [...]"

It must be understood that siyasah neither means nor implies 'politics'. Politics is a kaffir term which expresses or manifests the concealment of The Unity, which Unity is the essence of Islam. To understand Islam, and the Islamic apprehension - and in particular how Islam can be applied in the world - is to consider Islam in Islamic terms only. To apply something like 'politics' to Islam and speak and write about 'Islamic politics' is a fundamental mistake which constitutes imitation of the kuffar. Why? Because such words and terms, of the kuffar, are always referred back to kaffir ideas and concepts - just as 'politics' is referred back to the polis of Ancient Greece, and 'State' to Aristotle, Plato, Marx and others. This is, in effect, causal - historical - reductionism which is completely at odds with the acausal revelation of Islam. It is also a making profane that which is sacred: divorcing the Divinity from the practical application of Islam. It is exchanging knowledge for Jahiliyyah [...]"

In effect, siyasah is sacred: it belongs to, and manifests, what is sacred, divine. This is in complete and utter contrast to the temporal, profane - and lower - nature of kaffir politics."

It could be argued that since that personal tragedy in 2006 I have been 'driven' by a desire to understand both my extremist past and extremism, as well as by a desire to apprehend the numinous and how, sans denotata, it is and has been and can be presenced to we human beings.

RS: Do you intend to write anything else about your life or your philosophy of pathei-mathos?

DM: Answering a similar question almost ten years ago I replied in the negative and yet went on to write an awful lot more. The honest answer is that currently I do not intend to, but one never knows what circumstances may conspire to bring about a perhaps vainglorious desire to pontificate some more.

RS: What is your view of Islam now?

DM: As explained in several of my post-2012 writings, I still consider Islam and Christianity as manifesting both now

and in the past aspects of the numinous especially in relation to expiation and such awareness of the numinous as can bring and nurture a necessary personal humility.

But since both rely on revelation through words, chiefly written but sometimes aural, and both have sometimes been interpreted by some or by many in such a harsh way as has caused and contributed to the suffering of other human beings, then I as a result of my pathei-mathos and of a study of what I have termed the human culture of pathei-mathos, cannot and do not personally believe in or support them. For given such a reliance on words, on denotata, they can and possibly will be interpreted in a harsh way in the future by others.

RS: Is your own answer, your philosophy of pathei-mathos, suitable to or applicable to others?

DM: No, for it is not a supra-personal philosophy nor a way of life which might be suitable for others but only the fallible conclusions I have derived from striving to understand and admit my many mistakes and from the learning that, sometimes against my will, I acquired or believe I have acquired from diverse, sometimes extreme, experiences.

RS: How would you summarize what you have learned?

DM: As an appreciation of empathy, honour, humility, and compassion as personal virtues which we as individuals strive to live by; as an understanding of the need to not interfere in non-personal matters; and as being non-violent with the one and the only exception that necessitated by personal honour when we personally or our family or someone nearby are confronted in the immediacy of the moment by someone or by some others intent on doing harm or demanding we submit to their demands.

In such circumstances personal honour means that we without hesitation oppose them and fight and if circumstances require it use lethal force.

RS: Which surely means that you and perhaps your family are trained to defend yourselves with lethal force if necessary?

DM: Yes indeed.

RS: Which all seems to me to be a very pagan way of living. Would you agree?

DM: Depending on how one defines 'pagan' of course!

RS: I mean concern for and prepared to and trained to defend one's kith and kin, and having a local, a community, perspective as in olden times in England of one's village and the small personally known community dwelling there and on nearby land.

DM: In that sense, yes it is somewhat pagan. Which pagan weltanschauungen seems to me to have over causal Time been replaced by many and various other weltanschauungen derived from and reliant on denotata. In the form of, for example, the idea of some supra-local entity - a region, then a "nation", ruled by some usually male potentate whose governance was enforced by coercion, threat of imprisonment, and ultimately violence; and then in the form of the idea of a religion - in the Isles of Britain, Christianity, whose representatives were often in league with that regional or national potentate, hence inscriptions such as Dei Gratia Rex Angliæ on coinage.

RS: How do you view the current situation not only in England, the land of your ancestors, but worldwide and does your weltanschauung of pathei-mathos inform your view?

DM: My view is somewhat coloured by - perhaps I should have said informed by - my decades of rural living and working outdoors on farms and as a gardener, rather than by anything philosophical.

Perhaps a poem - one of my many "manically-depressed", "self-indulgent" poems, as one of my many political opponents once described them some years ago - may better express what such living and working have meant to me:

So this is Peace:  
As the Sun of warm November  
Warms and the grass grows with such mildness.

No strife, here;  
No place beyond this place  
As Farm meets meadow field  
And I upon some hessian sack sit, write  
To hear some distant calls from hedged-in sheep:

No breeze  
To stir the fallen leaves  
That lie among the seeds, there  
Where the old Oak towers, shading fence  
From Sun  
And the pond is hazed with midges.

So this is peace, found  
Where dew persists,

Flies feed to preen to rest  
And two Robins call from among that tangled brambled  
Bush  
Whose berries – unplucked, ripened – rot,  
While the Fox-worn trail wobbles  
Snaking  
Through three fields.

So, the silent Buzzard soars  
To shade me briefly:  
No haste, worry, nor Hubris, here  
Where there is much sadness, leaving  
As the damp field-mists of morning  
Have given way  
To Sun

A way of life, rural places, changed and changing: and for what and why? In some ways my weltanschauung of patheismathos is my answer: a way to live without the hubris of human-manufactured urban-centric supra-personal causal abstractions; a way where the natural balance that is presented through empathy and honour is an intimation of the numinous; and where there is an ancestral peace found, wordlessly treasured, and passed-on to the next generation.

RS: You expressed such sentiments in a letter - more of a missive - that you sent to me over a decade ago when you left that farm having had to seek work elsewhere. Which reading of that letter might be, if you agree, a fitting end to this interview.

DM: Agreed. But it will most probably be described as one of my "manically-depressed", "self-indulgent", missives!

RS:

"Work, in a small industrial concern; manual work with days spent indoors where the only light is from a multitude of bright fluorescent tubes and where the tedium of long hours is relieved only by a short morning break and one half unpaid hour for lunch when I sit, hedged-in by walls, in the small back yard on an old box upon broken concrete surrounded by broken glass; by old, smashed bricks; by patches of oil, and the detritus of such an urban place. Some sky - but not much - is visible over and above the roof and walls and vents, and nothing natural lives or even exists here: no tree, no bush, no flowers, not any weeds. No sound of birds - only noise, from the unceasing machines; from the lorries and vans which arrive and depart nearby, disgorging and receiving their goods. No peace; certainly no Numen of Nature.

There is only the incessant unnatural rhythm of industrial life, of factory toil - a card to be stamped by a clock: in, out, even for lunch. And, at days end, I - tired as the others - slope off and out into the nearby street where no one, passing, says "hello!" or greets me as almost always they did in those small villages of England where I have mostly lived. No, no greeting here; not even any eye-contact, held. For this is urban life where humans are shunted to shuffle encased in their worries, their inner worlds, and where traffic gluts streets. Nowhere here the calm, measured, quiet of that life, rural, where Time is what it is. Instead, there is abstraction, measuring out our lives as the clear water from a leaking tank seeps out, to the dirty ground, drop by drop by drop; drip drip dripping away, clean water to dirty ground... So I am once again adrift; not lost but far, far from home and measuring out my days until, sufficient money saved, I can return to the source of my belonging: there, where such dreams in such quiet places as may bring the Numen back to me.

Yet here, in this place of work, people rush to compete as if such swift toil was a badge of pride; thus do they scamper, to complete abstractly-imposed tasks; for profits, and ego, must be made, saved. Thus do we toil - so many slaves, en-slaved, needing but not-needing the pittance to live such a life as lives among the urban clutter, the smallness, the meanness and the sprawl. But I, I have seen the sky and hold here in my being such visions as bring the Earth to earth - dust to dust, and life to Life: one world, one planet, one dimension, among so many. Nowhere for so many in day or night that sigh when we close our eyes to feel the oboe d'amore of one slow movement of one piece by JS Bach, bringing thus such quiet tears of empathy as connect us, one human life, to other human lives beyond the-words the-abstractions - and thus take us out, out, out into the being, the Numen, of Nature. There is then in such a moment that sacred precious meaning which cramped urban living, and traffic, has, these days, defiled.

No beauty, here, no song to the sanctity of Life - except, perhaps, fleetingly glimpsed in her eyes, face, as she, the young blonde-haired Polish worker, smiles. Four, five times - more - this week we have looked into each other's eyes as she, I, smiled, touched-but-not-touched, in wordless greeting. Then, such humanity over, we return to our tasks - I, to lift, move, heavy laden objects; she, to her machine. But she is there, in the background, as she works with her sister - quietly, stoically, both toiling as they toil: hard, grafting, as if inured to such a way of life. So they keep their own company - with few words between them; few for others, for they have "little english" and at lunch sit together beside the machine that steals their day, gazing ahead while they eat their meagre food perhaps enwrapped in dreams which are their dreams, bringing perchance some glimmer of hope among the stark noisy brightly-lit bleakness.

This life is grim, grim grim, only saved by such an intimation. No insects, outside, as I sit here, scribbling - except: a few ants, and I gasp-in lungfulls of the cleaner outside air; only a few ants, dithering, backwards,

forwards, over the detritus, as if lost. Toiling, grafting, working - untouched, it seems, by that knowing of Life which a knowing of death may bring.

Such are we here, slaves of a modern life - sure, such toil could bring me the security of some settled home; warmth enough, from fire, to ease the pains that seep now into olding flesh and bones; food enough to keep me well; walls and roof enough to keep clothes dry from rain and turn a chilling wind, away; perhaps another companion-bestfriend-wife... But such a price, to pay: too high a price, it seems, for freedom, Numen, lost.

No time, here - then - to watch the Sun rise on a clear day; no time here - then - to catch the growing Dawn Chorus as it grows, week by week from early to late and later Spring. Nowhere to wander watching clouds form and shade to move as they are moved. No stream to watch as sunlight filters and fractures and water ripples, singing a wordless song. No sounds of an English Summer - flies, darting aimless and aimed; bees, seeking; birds, warning, calling, sparring; no wind breezing as it breezes among tree, hedge, reed, grass and Autumn's late leaf-litter... No natural Time to stand dreaming or sitting as the day passes in moments of memory. No natural Time, of Nature - only that unsettling abstract time of clocking-in-clocks, measuring out the seconds to our death. No, no natural Time, here: only the unnatural unnecessary one of which adds one hour to herald so-called "Summer time" - for even when I, toiling hard during years on Farms, planted, in Spring, or harvested in Autumn - weather-permitting - such "government time" made no difference: work began with Sunrise, to finish, weather-permitting, as the Sun began to set, for thus we followed there in that, our almost vanished world, a different Time to the time of some rootless traffic-fume-filled city.

Yes, freedom is hard, while savings dry and boots are worn as one walks, alone, with that walking that tries to measure out the now almost forgotten pace of a rural life and a rural way of living, bringing back as such slow rhythm and quietness does that connexion to presence the Numen without and within. Yes, freedom is hard while too much toil for another, in the wrong place, lasts." {9}

ooo

{1} The archive is at <https://web.archive.org/web/20101111104858/http://www.davidmyatt.info/> [Accessed August 2022]

{2} Myatt wrote:

"The original message of a revelation or of a spiritual way often seems to become obscured or somehow gets lost over centuries. A loss or obscuration partly due to the reliance on revealed or given texts; partly due to divergent interpretations of such texts, with some interpretations accepted or rejected by those assuming or vested with a religious authority; and partly due to a reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

{3} Included in Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-selected-ns-writings1/myatt-selected-ns-writings1.pdf>

{4} Myatt's somewhat idiosyncratic translations of these fragments of Heraclitus are: (a) Fragment 1:

"Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

Text, translation and commentary: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

(b) Diogenes Laërtius ix. 7 in context:

ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

"The foundation/base/essence of all beings [ 'things' ] is πυρὸς [pyros] to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons."

Text, translation and commentary: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-and-enantiodromia/>

{5} In his 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, Myatt wrote:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purview of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited

nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding."

The essay is included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf> [Accessed August 2022]

{6} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/> [Accessed August 2022]

{7} For those of a rational disposition who are inclined to judge matters and individuals for themselves, Myatt's autobiography *Myngath* is available at: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf> [Accessed August 2022]

{8} Koehler, Daniel. *From Traitor to Zealot: Exploring the Phenomenon of Side-Switching in Extremism and Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. pp.153-163.

One inaccuracy among several is that Koehler (p.161) confuses Myatt's fiancée Fran - who committed suicide in 2006 - with Myatt's second wife, Sue, who died of cancer in 1993. Some years after Sue's death Myatt re-married and lived with his third wife near Malvern - in a detached village house, where he was filmed nearby by BBC Panorama in 2000 - until he left that village some months after that filming to move alone to Shropshire to live on a farm. He met Fran several years after that move to Shropshire where he had previously lived from the late 1970s to 1994.

{9} I have retained, at his request, Myatt's idiosyncratic punctuation and spelling.

Myatt's use of the term 'numen' deserves some explanation. He uses it several times in his translations of tracts from the Corpus Hermeticum, particularly in tract III, *ἱερός λόγος*, where he writes in his commentary:

"the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: 'numinal and of numinal physis', where by numinal - in this *ἱερός λόγος* - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculous) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

In his scholarly essay *A Note Concerning θεϊότης* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/03/28/a-note-concerning-θεϊότης/> - he places numen in relation to θεῖος and the Greek text of Romans, 1.20.

---

## David Myatt And The Pinch of Destiny

The interview was conducted, through an intermediary, via the medium of e-mail in 2022 with an anonymous American academic who used the moniker Nameless Therein.

The interview highlights the difference between the contemporary academic approach and Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos, based as the former is on extensive quotations from others, and founded as Myatt's philosophy is on pathei-mathos (a learning from personal often hard experiences) and a scholarly appreciation of Greco-Roman culture. Thus, to many detailed questions Myatt responds by referencing such foundations:

"I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires."

"I have no answer to [your] question *What is the Meaning of Myatt?* because all I seem to be is one fallible mortal among so many billions past and present and one who will die soon having already outlived his three score and ten. Someone who has and perhaps vainly tried in some way in the past ten years or so, and in various poems, to record his feelings, his fallible understanding of himself and the world he has passed through and the events and the people he has, or so he believes, learned from. In those past ten or so years my references are usually only the classical authors; or occasionally a poet such as TS Eliot or a composer such as JS Bach because for those years my world, my influences, have been the outdoor world of Nature, my pathei-mathos, the women I have loved and lost, with my only constant companions those classical authors, my memories, and such a poet and such a composer."

ooooo

Nameless Therein: You have stated that your philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative. {1 As expressions of that

expiation, you mention that your writings and reclusiveness "do little to offset the deep sadness felt, except in fleeting moments." {2 In your "desire for a numinous non-religious expiation," {3 your life may be said to resemble a kind of secular restoration of the Fall.

Insofar as your non-religious expiation resembles what Wilfred Cantwell Smith describes as faith, involving "man's capacity to perceive, to symbolize, and to live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to his and her life," {4 the "deep sadness felt" about your past is perhaps offset less by what you have learned and more so by who you have become. In this – in the way your own pathei-mathos has shaped you – one can sense sincere atonement. Could you comment on how pathei-mathos can help one "live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to his ... [or] her life"?

David Myatt: I admit I do not presume to know – I do not even now understand – "how pathei-mathos can help one live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to someone's life".

All I do know is what I wrote over a decade ago about something which somehow in some ineffable way seemed to personally work for me:

"the so beautiful sound of birdsong in English woods and fields in early May; or perhaps the sight of small cumulus clouds slowly passing beneath the sky of blue in Summer when Sun so warms us that we stop to wipe away the sweat upon our brow; or, perhaps, that so special scent of a meadow field in middle June after rain when Sun, re-emerging from passing stormfull cloud, dries us and our so fragile land, and we are moved – so moved, so still, amid the country silence – that we lie down awhile beside the Hawthorn hedge to feel again this simple English paradise of field, farm, life, and burgeoning birth." {5

But this, such a heritage, such a still so very numinous place, is not an option for so very many around the world that I can only and so fallibly suggest it might possibly be such a Nature in such a place as still exists, and a personal loyal love of partners and of family bound together through personal honour.

NT: On the subject of faith, Wilfred Cantwell Smith notes that "faith is that quality of or available to humankind by which we are characterized as transcending, or are enabled to transcend, the natural order." {6

This points to an interesting disparity you previously highlighted regarding the activities of your extremist decades, which were marked by a desire to "bring-into-being some-thing that ... [you now recognize] would not and could not, in centennial terms (let alone in millennial or cosmic terms) endure." {7

In the desire to "stop or somehow try to control, to shape, the natural flux of change ... [and] to preserve, whatever the cost, what we or others after us might bring-into-being," you noted the underlying belief that you and your associates "would or could do what no one in human history had been able to do: make our presencings immortal, or at least immune to the natural cycle of birth-life-decay-death."8 Having since rejected those beliefs, in addition to the activities and writings of your extremist decades, how would you now reconcile the desire to create enduring works capable of transcending the natural order with a rejection of politics, religion, and violent social activism? {9

DM: Again I have no abstractive, generalized, ideological supra-personal answers. All I have is my feeling, my intuition, my fallible learning that it is a personal loyal love and a very personal honour in the immediacy of the moment which matter.

NT: Could you comment on how to reconcile the tension between the universal application of pathei-mathos to our species across thousands of years of human history on the one hand and the recognition of our own mortality as a human species on the other? In other words, how is pathei-mathos meant to endure according to what you call the "Cosmic Perspective" {10 in light of our own mortality, and particularly without a "religious" dimension that transcends the natural order?

Might pathei-mathos' endurance be immanent rather than transcendent, presenced in our mortality rather than beyond it? And how might this relate to Aeschylus' original sense of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) with respect to "[the immortal Zeus] guiding mortals to reason"? {11

DM: Is there or should there ever be anything which is or which is suggested as a 'universal' or a religious or an 'ideological' supra-personal application or causal abstraction? Something believed or hoped to be enduring?

My own fallible experience is that there is not and perhaps should never be again, since all supra-personal suggestions or applications or abstractions however denoted in my experience and in respect of my classical learning immediately or sooner later are the genesis of hubris and suffering.

Thus and yet again I am returned to a personal loyal love between two people and/or their family and to a very personal honour in the immediacy of the moment.

NT: William James said that religion is "'the individual pinch of destiny' as the individual feels it." {12 James' characterization of religion was largely a response to the question, "What is the character of this universe in which we dwell?" {13 In order to address this question, he noted that one "must go behind the foreground of existence and reach down to that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence, intimate or alien, terrible or amusing, lovable or odious, which in some degree everyone possesses." {14

In "[t]his sense of the world's presence," we become either "strenuous or careless, devout or blasphemous, gloomy or



exultant, about life at large." {15 And our reaction, he says, which is "involuntary and inarticulate and often half unconscious," is the "completest of all our answers" to the above question. {16

In making cosmic meaningful tragedy from the individual to the broader context of our species, it seems that this "pinch" has been present throughout your life and your philosophy despite your "desire for a numinous non-religious expiation" {17 and your view that mainstream religions no longer provide "a satisfactory answer to the question of suffering ... [or of] what may be required for us to consciously change ourselves for the better." {18 In reaching down to "that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence," how would you describe your reaction to that "sense of the world's presence," and how has that changed over the course of your life?

DM: We human beings especially of the male genus and often because of centuries of so-called "thinking" make matters of existence, Being, and morality seem complicated, and offer our own suggestions as to how matters could or perhaps should be.

But over the course of my life I seem to have learned that the suffering such suggestions cause and the hubris of humans continues. The invention of causal abstractions continues, century after century. And the Cosmos with its billions of galaxies and its perhaps billions of life-habitable planets continues. So, we humans here on Terra Firma are what? Some transient fallible persons sallying forth – and killing, causing suffering – on behalf of some ancient or modern abstraction such as some religious faith or some nation-State or on behalf of some personal instinct we seemingly cannot control?

Simply expressed: there should no longer be an aspiration for a broader supra-personal meaning.

NT: William James' description of religion seems oddly in keeping with what, in paraphrasing Cicero, you have described as the essence of ancient European paganism. {19

Additionally, your characterization of the ancient sense of *pathei-mathos* as wisdom arising from personal suffering {20 also seems in keeping with the Pyrrhonian sense of *ataraxia* (ἀταραξία) or "freedom from worry," {21 which is reached by raising "oneself above a condition of misery and despair" through self-mastery and fortitude. {22 With respect to the ancient question, "How can we keep from suffering?" {23 your life and writings seem to fluctuate between resilience and renunciation. In this, there seems to be an almost Stoic undertone with respect to how the ideas that have shaped your worldview do not resemble "an interesting pastime or even a particular body of knowledge, but ... a way of life." {24 You have mentioned the influence of Marcus Aurelius on your thinking, which may explain that undertone. {25 Looking back, how do you view the Stoic notion of elevating sorrow rather than abolishing it {26 in order to overcome and then meaningfully reshape it in our lives? Does this resilience in the face of tragic renunciation have any bearing on the overarching theme of honor throughout your life?

DM: As ever these days, I am wary of a general term – in this case Stoicism – being applied to describe what a person or some persons wrote or such writings ancient or otherwise.

In this matter before answering a specific question I would have to read critical editions of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and the necessary others, and then undertake my own translations and commentaries with particular attention to what words such as *tempus* and πένθος and εὐδαιμονία in their work may have meant and implied to those writers and their contemporaries and not what is meant or assumed now by such terms as 'time' and 'grief' and 'good fortune'/'happiness'. Such a task would occupy me for perhaps a year if not more. One of many comparisons of interest might be between Seneca's *De Consolatio ad Marciam* and how Antigone is portrayed by Sophocles and Clytemnestra by Aeschylus.

But from previous readings of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and some of the necessary others I would in regard to honour answer in the negative given how I now understand honour as an individual feeling related to the numinous which cannot be abstracted out from a personal moment in the form of some written or aural code, ethical or otherwise, or become a basis for or a part of some -ism or some -ology.

NT: On the subject of religion and the previous question on Stoicism, I am reminded of the Romanian nihilist Emil Cioran's vitriolic but insightful words from his little-known article, "A Bouquet of Heads." Remarking on Christianity and Stoicism in the ancient world, he says the following:

The Greco-Roman twilight deserved a better enemy, a better promise, a better religion. How can you believe even in the shadow of progress when you remember that those Christian fables, with no trouble at all, smothered Stoicism! If Stoicism had been able to grow and spread, to seize hold of the world, man would have come through, or almost. Resignation, made obligatory, would have taught us to endure our suffering with dignity, to silence our voices, to face our Nothingness coldly.... To accuse no one, to stoop neither to sadness, nor joy, nor regret, to reduce our connection with the world to a harmonious play of defeat, to live condemned and serene, never imploring the deity but rather putting him on notice.... That was not possible. Stoicism, overrun from all sides and faithful to its principles, had the elegance to die without a struggle. A religion founds itself on the ruins of wisdom, but the tactics used by religion are scarcely appropriate to wisdom. {27

Many would agree that you have endured suffering with dignity over the course of your life. But rather than founding your legacy on the ruins of wisdom, you appear to have forged an existential crucible from which many now draw inspiration. How would you like to see that inspiration embodied in the lives of those who look up to you? And if those ruins were a monument to the past, what virtues and activities would you like to see take their place?

DM: My answer can possibly be deduced from my previous one. Just as my fallible understanding is that honour cannot be abstracted from a personal moment to become some sort of principle or guide, so my similar fallible understanding is that a person who learns by means of pathei-mathos cannot be or rather should not become such a guide or even an example and certainly should not assume any sort of guiding

NT: In a 2017 interview, you noted that both the Numinous Way and the philosophy of pathei-mathos now seem to you "a rather wordy and a rather egoistic, vainful, attempt to present what I (rightly or wrongly) believed I had learned about myself and the world as a result of various experiences." {28 You add that, in your solitude and now concentrating on your translations, you live "each day as it passes ... unconcerned about what my being – and my relation to Being – is now or perhaps should be." {29 In some respects, your withdrawal into solitude resembles Mother Teresa's confession of feeling a "deep loneliness," having previously confessed that her "own soul ... [remained] in deep darkness [and] desolation" as she began to doubt her faith. {30 In this, there may be an element of truth in what Emil Cioran says of solitude:

"Solitude is not a gift, it is a mission: to rise to it, to take it upon oneself, is to renounce that portion of baseness needed to guarantee the success of any enterprise whatever, religious or otherwise."31 On the other hand, C. S. Lewis' point that "[e]very mode of being in the whole universe contributes to ... [man]; he is a cross-section of being"32 carries some weight. These two tensions additionally seem to resolve in the words of Gregory the Great (540-604), who said that "because man has existence (esse) in common with stones, life with trees, and understanding (discernere) with angels, he is rightly called by the name of the world." {33

The sentiments expressed by all of these figures point to an important concern: In your solitude and your lack of concern with what your being and your relation to Being is now or should be, one senses the danger of also losing concern for your relation to other beings, and specifically to other human beings. In the shadow of commonality you share with those who take inspiration from your work, what do you hope to wager in the eclipse between how they see your life and how they speak your name – perhaps not as the name of the world, but certainly as a name of theirs?

DM: The question of possibly "losing concern for your relation to other beings, and specifically to other human beings" has bothered me and does bother me and the only answer I have is again that of honour in the immediacy of the living moment which seems to me the only numinous exception to 'not interfering in the world' however good one believes one's interference to be.

All this means seems to me to amount to doing what is honourable when personally, in the immediacy of the moment, confronted with someone or some many doing what is dishonourable in relation to another person or persons or to another living being. My intuition is that a person of honour either instinctively knows what is dishonourable or has learned so from personal experience.

NT: In a letter to his brother Henry James during the completion of his great work on the Principles of Psychology, William James said, "I have to forge every sentence in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts." {34 In contrast to European science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Alfred North Whitehead notes that James was alluding to a "new tinge to modern minds ... [as] a vehement and passionate interest in the relation of general principles to irreducible and stubborn facts." {35 Whitehead elaborates on this, noting that: All the world over and at all times there have been practical men, absorbed in "irreducible and stubborn facts": all the world over and at all times there have been men of philosophic temperament who have been absorbed in the weaving of general principles. It is this union of passionate interest in the detailed facts with equal devotion to abstract generalisation which forms the novelty in our present society. Previously it had appeared sporadically and as if by chance. This balance of mind has now become part of the tradition which infects cultivated thought. It is the salt which keeps life sweet.

The main business of universities is to transmit this tradition as a widespread inheritance from generation to generation. {36

Whitehead's observance that the wedding of particular facts with abstract generalizations marks a distinct shift from the "disruption of Western Christianity and the rise of modern science" in the sixteenth century {37 to a "new colouring of ways of thought ... [which] had been proceeding slowly for many ages in the European peoples." {38 The new mentality this gave way to "altered the metaphysical presuppositions and the imaginative contents of our minds; so that now the old stimuli provoke a new response," which Whitehead notes was "more important even than the new science and the new technology." {39

Given that this wedding of particular facts with abstraction was in large part responsible for a new way of thinking that shaped the whole of Europe, do you find it problematic that much of your writing has a tendency to be interpreted as pulling this wedding apart or even declaiming a divorce (two examples being the emphasis on individual or particular experience and the negative sense of "causal abstraction")?

DM: A marriage and a pulling apart of or a conflict between what? An idea, an ideal? Another idea? A generalization termed 'Europe', a generalization termed Western Christianity; another one named modern science? Another termed our present society? And so on.

My focus in the past ten or so years has been on the personal and interactions between individuals such as personal love based on a loyalty between individuals and the families that two such individuals can bring-into-being biological or otherwise. Such persons, such interactions, can and do sometimes cause suffering; but is this and has this been on the scale of that caused by ideologies, ideas, ideals, and entities such as codified religions, nations, States, Empires?

Do the achievements of some such nations, States, Empires, of some ideas, ideals, and what has been termed 'science' and 'technology' balance out what suffering they may have caused?

For in my experience it is or it should be a question of balance; of accepting there are limits; of accepting responsibility; of accepting that the personal and such things as love, empathy, compassion, and honour are the essential aspects of that necessary balance, with extremism of whatever type or form the result of the harshness of personal imbalance when love, empathy, compassion, and honour are ignored or rejected or never personally known because some -ism or -ology or some manufactured entity or hatred of some perceived enemy have priority in the life of an individual with our human culture of pathei-mathos also ignored or rejected or never personally known.

Have we as a species in the past experienced in some way and in some place a part of the necessary balance? Possibly, for a while. Do we have a part of such a balance now in any society in the world? Possibly, although some may disagree. Are we as a species learning from our human culture of pathei-mathos with its documentation by means of music, memoirs, poetry, and other arts, of human suffering, human love, tragedy, and loss?

NT: Two-part question. Question one. You have noted that certain forms of abstraction tend to be associated with the masculine and can take on a kind of violence toward muliebral virtues like empathy, compassion, and humility. {40 This can occur, for example, in the masculine "favouring of abstractions and the notion of an idealized duty over empathy and compassion and the muliebral virtues in general," {41 which can lead to forms of extremism.

However, this push against abstraction has resulted in a tendency by many of your readers to identify abstraction with an erroneous or even harmful way of thinking. That identification seems dangerously close to a kind of nominalism or rejection of all universals and abstract objects, {42 which itself may germinate a species of extremism.

I suspect part of this tension may have been influenced by Aristotle and his account of physis (φύσις) or nature, where, in contrast to Plato's Timaeus, "nature is not an abstract, impersonal, 'all-pervading demiurgic force'," {43 but rather an "inner driving force we reference when saying of a natural being: 'That is its nature.'" {44 I am also reminded of the medieval problem of universals, {45 which highlights a debate that spans the work of the Neo-Platonists, pagans such as Plotinus and Porphyry, and medieval Christians such as Augustine and Boethius. {46

With respect to your work, one could argue that the muliebral virtues at the heart of the philosophy of pathei-mathos require a grounding in some sense of abstraction, whether in the transition from individual pathei-mathos to the broader context of collective and sustainable millennial change, in the universal application of pathei-mathos to the human condition, or in the way individual experience is related to other forms of life. Part of the confusion regarding your use of the term "abstraction" may rest on your characterization of the difference between personal knowledge of an individual and reifying that individual according to some ideology or cause. {47 Given that many readers seem to miss the broader context of this distinction, would you mind clarifying what forms of abstraction you view as negative, detrimental, or harmful and what forms you view as productive or even necessary for the cultivation of the muliebral virtues you have described?

Question two. In an interview with you from 2014, {48 your work *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* is cited with respect to what you identify as the inflexible and often excessive masculine character that goes with extremism.<sup>49</sup> In your view, are there non-extremist contexts where the masculine can find positive, non-violent applications? In what cases might a masculine character compliment "the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved" rather than work against them? {50

Conversely, are there cases, however exceptional, where these muliebral virtues could become vices? Though such cases may be few and far between, your description of the difference between personal love and empathy comes to mind, where you noted that "the emotion gendered by personal love can also cause suffering both of the person who loves and in regard to the one loved, especially if there is not a mutual, loyal, equality of love." {51

Do you think there is a danger in this personal asymmetry carrying over to the collective level, as in the case of certain religious ideologies? And much like the important wedding of the particular with the abstract described by Whitehead in the previous question, how might we wed the masculine and the muliebral without inciting these forms of harm?

DM: In relation to masculine and muliebral I understand them as descriptors of personal behaviour and attitudes and how it seems to me that the numinous and thus the honourable tend to be and have tended to be manifest in the world and in our lives. Created abstractions tend toward the supra-personal and tend to cause suffering sooner or later.

An operative expression here is 'tend to be'. Do empathy, compassion, humility, and honour tend toward us not causing suffering? Do ideologies and codified religions tend to – over durations of causal time – cause suffering, harm, and schisms resulting from exegesis?

Does what is often described as the masculine virtue of heroism tend toward suffering by making a or the hero an ideal to be admired and followed, or should it be more correctly described as a balance of both masculine and muliebral if it is understood in the personal sense as the actions of one honourable person?

For another operative expression in my attempts at explanation is 'personal behaviour and attitudes' which being variable and subject to change can perhaps only and sometimes point us toward a certain intuition that might be an uncovering of a possible answer to the question *quid est veritas*. That what is uncovered is only a personal, causally-dependant, experience and a knowing but always dies and yet can return to be rediscovered yet again by others.

Given my hubriatic past and the suffering I have personally caused by championing this or that ideology or this or that religion or this or that abstraction I am all too fallible, all too prone to making mistakes so perhaps I could be wrong regarding this and other matters.

NT: In addition to expiation and remorse, much of your work conveys an overtone of regret. In your recent writings, this can be sensed acutely in the opening sections of "A Vagabond in Exile from the Gods," to cite one example. How have you come to terms with what you now view as mistakes of the past in terms of your legacy to the future and its influence on the world? Additionally, in contrast to the overtones of regret, the desire for forgiveness seems to be a recurrent undertone throughout your writing. Against the sullied public and the lies that your opponents continue to spread about you, will you find the courage to forgive yourself? In reconciling the pain of the past with its shadow of regret, what do you hope to see in the dawning of the future, and what enduring works do you hope to leave for future generations in the brave valence of tomorrow?

DM: In regard to regret for having caused suffering to others through both selfishness and adherence to various -isms or -ologies, the personal lamentation derived and derives from acknowledging my suffering-causing mistakes and from what I hope is an understanding of our human physis and an understanding of the harshness of extremism. As for forgiveness, who or what can forgive those who have caused suffering? In many cultural traditions it was of course the person or persons who were directly harmed or their relatives. In Christian, Islamic and Judaic tradition it is God/Allah.

But the impersonal nature of many suffering-causing extremist deeds and of many criminal justice systems often means there are no living victims or relatives to directly offer forgiveness even should they desire to do so, which would probably be unlikely given the harshness, intractability, the fanatical hatred, of so many extremists.

While there are expiatory means in the Christian, Islamic and Judaic traditions, if one does not or no longer believes in God/Allah then there can be no forgiveness. Thus, for me as mentioned in some of my essays, my weltanschauung of pathemathos, such answers as these, my many autobiographical effusions, are my attempts at expiation.

NT: Before one can derive wisdom from meaningful suffering it seems that one must first constitute the world meaningful. Deriving meaning from the world and constituting it in turn both rest on the way we interpret the world and the framework of interpretation we have at our disposal. I think many individuals today are unaware of the disparity between the framework of interpretation we had at our disposal in ages past and the framework of interpretation that distinctly characterizes modernity. In some respects, the Hellenic vitality of your philosophy risks becoming lost in the "transliteration" from the individual to modernity when interpreted without this frame of reference. In an attempt to sustain that vitality, I think the following summary by Thomas Howard regarding what he calls "The Old Myth and the New" frames this well:

There were some ages in Western history that have occasionally been called Dark. They were dark, it is said, because in them learning declined, and progress paused, and men labored under the pall of belief. A cause-effect relationship is frequently felt to exist between the pause and the belief. Men believed in things like the Last Judgment and fiery torment. They believed that demented people had devils in them, and that disease was a plague from heaven. They believed that they had souls, and that what they did in this life had some bearing on the way in which they would finally experience reality.

They believed in portents and charms and talismans. And they believed that God was in heaven and Beelzebub in hell and that the Holy Ghost had impregnated the Virgin Mary and that the earth and sky were full of angelic and demonic conflict. Altogether, life was very weighty, and there was no telling what might lie behind things. The ages were, as I say, dark.

Then the light came. It was the light that has lighted us men into a new age. Charms, angels, devils, plagues, and parthenogenesis have fled from the glare into the crannies of memory. In their place have come coal mining and  $E = mc^2$  and plastic and group dynamics and napalm and urban renewal and rapid transit. Men were freed from the fear of the Last Judgment; it was felt to be more bracing to face Nothing than to face the Tribunal. They were freed from worry about getting their souls into God's heaven by the discovery that they had no souls and that God had no heaven. They were freed from the terror of devils and plagues by the knowledge that the thing that was making them scream and foam was not an imp but only their own inability to cope, and that the thing that was clawing out their entrails was not divine wrath but only cancer. Altogether, life became much more livable since it was clear that in fact nothing lay behind things. The age was called enlightened.

The myth sovereign in the old age was that everything means everything. The myth sovereign in the new is that nothing means anything. {52

With respect to Howard's description of "the myth sovereign in the old age" and "the myth sovereign in the new," where do you situate your own "paganus weltanschauung" and how do you reconcile it against the modern view that "nothing means anything"?

DM: I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires.

NT: In another article, I have cited Pope Benedict XVI's comments regarding the topic of violent religious conversion. Recalling a dialogue between "the erudite Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus and an educated Persian on the

subject of Christianity and Islam," {53 the Pope recounts how:

The emperor, after having expressed himself so forcefully, goes on to explain in detail the reasons why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable.

Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. "God," he says, "is not pleased by blood – and not acting reasonably (σὺν λόγῳ) is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats. . To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death..." {54

Having long-since rejected Muslim extremism and having had a first-hand account of it for ten years as a radical Muslim, I think the Pope's framing of the aforesaid dialogue finds an acute expression in your current views on the issue. In "Understanding and Countering Muslim Extremism," you describe two aims that typically motivate Muslim extremism – a supra-personal one and a personal one – which you note are "inextricably entwined." {55

You additionally note that "one effective way to counter Muslim extremism is for Muslims themselves to, using Quran and Sunnah, counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by the extremists," thereby pointing to "the humanity that is at the heart of Islam; a humanity so evident in the millions of Muslims ... world-wide." {56

Speaking to that humanity – and more specifically to the humility you cite {57 – how do you now view the spreading of faith through violence with respect to its incompatibility with the nature of God and the nature of the soul described by emperor Manuel II Paleologus? Additionally, if the supra-personal and personal aims that motivate this form of extremism are intertwined, how might we ward against them in their many variations within society and within our own lives?

DM: It seems to me that there are difficult and long-standing questions in relation to religions which wholly or in part rely on texts as the Christian, Islamic, Judaic and Buddhist traditions have done. Questions of exegesis and the different interpretations which often result.

Thus, even if as I wrote in the essay you refer to that one way – not the only way – in regard to events such as 9/11 and 7/7 is for Muslims themselves using Quran and Sunnah to counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by others, that may not prevent such harsh interpretations now or in the future given the reliance on texts with their inevitable exegesis.

In another essay I compared the Shia and the Sunna traditions noting that the Shia tradition of Taqlid seemed to me to preclude exegesis by those scholarly unqualified to do so. I suggested that this might explain why the Shia tradition has:

"no such thing as modern independent extremist Shia groups who indiscriminately target and kill the kuffar ('infidels') in Western lands or elsewhere, or who fly aeroplanes into buildings or who blow themselves up in order to kill 'infidels'. For Shia mujtahidun have given rulings in respect of such things." {58

This should lead to difficult questions for not only groups such as ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah (commonly known as Islamic State) and their followers who regularly target and kill Shia Muslims but also for Western allies of Saudi Arabia who have for decades imposed sanctions on Iran and who support a conflict in Yemen in which Shia Muslims have been killed in their thousands and Shia children starved to death.

How many in the West even know what these difficult questions are? Not only in relation to Shia Muslims but in relation to exegesis of Christian texts such as The Gospels? To in some minor way draw attention to such questions I began a translation of and writing a commentary on The Gospel According To John and have so far for various personal reasons only managed to make public chapters one to five, available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/gospel-of-john-1-5.pdf>

NT: In your autobiography, Myngath, you mention an interest in chess in your youth. In fact, you mention being one of the only competitors to have drawn against a visiting Grandmaster in a simultaneous display at the Singapore Polytechnic as a young man. {59 As a chess player, I would be remiss not to ask: do you still have the recorded chess notation for that match? Additionally, do you still play chess? And did you find anything applicable or of value with respect to the lessons you learned in your study of the game and your subsequent study of martial arts?

DM: In regard to the Chess game in Singapore, I do not any longer have the 'descriptive' notation of the game, but the results of the tournament were briefly together with my surname mentioned in a local newspaper – it may have been The Straits Times – and I hunched over a Chess board fleeting appeared in a local TV newsreel of the event.

I lost interest in Chess when, living in Blighty in 1968, I first met Colin Jordan and became a National-Socialist activist in his newly formed British Movement.

NT: In one of your early relationships as a young man, you mention that you and your female companion once spent hours listening to jazz at a small club, noting that "she was a Jazz aficionado and very knowledgeable about that genre." {60 Do you recall what artists or songs you two enjoyed listening to at the time, and do you enjoy the genre? Additionally, are there other genres, artists, or songs of special significance for you that you would care to mention? You have noted that classical music has played an important role in your life, and I am curious to hear more about your musical influences.

DM: Being a young man in love with a lady who was Jazz aficionado I did for a while try to share her interest in and enthusiasm for such music but failed, given my interest in and love of classical music. Which interest began when as a young boy in a private – Whites-only – school in Africa our music teacher played our class a Long Playing record of music by JS Bach performed by Segovia. It was transformative.

NT: I doubt I am alone in feeling that your poetry reveals something deeply moving about the way you and your worldview have transformed over the course of your life. I find the poems in *One Exquisite Silence* particularly moving. Would you care to provide any additional background regarding the circumstances that led to the composition of any of these poems? I am especial y interested in "Travelling," which affects me intensely at this stage of my life.

DM: The poem *One Exquisite Silence* was composed not long after I met and fell in love with a lady who worked on a commercial (wholesale) plant nursery; while the Travelling poem was composed not long after I left Leeds (and my violent National-Socialist activism) in 1974 to wander the English countryside for a while as a vagabond, as was the poem *Summer Days Walking Roads*. The poem titled *Relict* was composed during a visit to a rather neglected cemetery when in 1976 I was travelling around and staying in various monasteries in the United Kingdom with a view to becoming a Catholic monk. The poem titled *Wine* was composed in Spain in the early 1970's, before I moved to Leeds, during another period when I was wandering around wondering what to do with my life.

NT: Martin Heidegger revived one of the most important questions in the Western philosophical tradition: what is the meaning of Being? This question set the philosophical tradition in motion all the way back to the ancient Greeks. At one level, the question points to the fact that we general y operate through an unclarified pre-comprehension of what we mean by "exist," or what we mean by "this is" versus "this is not," where for the ancient Greeks Being was equated with ongoing or constant presence. At a deeper level, it points to an important interpretive dynamic regarding how we are to understand the type of being we are, the one who asks the question and for whom the question is an issue.

Much like Heidegger's question, there are many theories regarding how to interpret the meaning of your life. Sadly, all of these have a tendency to reduce the ideas and ideals that motivated your life's narrative to deeds that you have long-since denounced and atoned for.

Put another way, many are concerned with the details of your life without being equipped to take seriously the ideas that have shaped it. Given that your philosophy is not just a collection of ideas but a mode of living, this presents two problems. The first concerns the philosophy of pathei-mathos, where the way one interprets his or her experiences through the lens of that philosophy is cal ed into question when one is not equipped to address or interpret the meaning of the philosophy itself. In that case, there is often an asymmetry between the vital experience needed to understand the philosophy and the framework needed to interpret those experiences, where the two eventual y disconnect or fail to connect at all. The second problem concerns the attempt by others to interpret your life without first being equipped to interpret their own. We have seen this time and time again with respect to your opponents, in the media, and even among those who take inspiration from your life and work. I would thus like to conclude with one final question, returning us, as is so often the case, to where we began: what is the meaning of David Myatt?

DM: I have no answer to the question "What is the Meaning of Myatt?" because all I seem to be is one fallible mortal among so many billions past and present and one who will die soon having already outlived his three score and ten. Someone who has and perhaps vainly tried in some way in the past ten years or so, and in various poems, to record his feelings, his fallible understanding of himself and the world he has passed through and the events and the people he has, or so he believes, learned from.

In those past ten or so years my references are usually only the classical authors; or occasionally a poet such as TS Eliot or a composer such as JS Bach because for those years my world, my influences, have been the outdoor world of Nature, my pathei-mathos, the women I have loved and lost, with my only constant companions those classical authors, my memories, and such a poet and such a composer.

27.iv.22

Notes

1 David Myatt, "Some Questions for DWM (March 2014)," David Myatt – Πάθει Μάθος, May 2014, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-questions-may2014.html>.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Faith and Belief: The Difference Between Them* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998), 141.

5 <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2010/05/02/rain-following-weeks-of-warmful-april-sun/>

6 Smith, Faith and Belief, 142.

7 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 David Myatt, "I. Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way," in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 5th ed. (CreateSpace, 2018), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/numinous-way-pathei-mathos.pdf>.

12 Clifford Geertz, "The Pinch of Destiny: Religion as Experience, Meaning, Identity, Power," chap. 8 in *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 167. See William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902; New York: Routledge, 2002), 386. Citations refer to the Routledge edition.

13 James, *Varieties*, 33.

14 Ibid., 32.

15 Ibid., 32-33.

16 Ibid., 33.

17 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

18 David Myatt, "Some Questions for DWM, 2017," *David Myatt: Learning from Adversity; a Rejection of Extremism*, 2017, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/dwm-questions-2017-v1b.pdf>.

19 See Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017": "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivance that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself."

20 Myatt, "Authority and Way."

21 Richard Bett, "Pyrrho," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, updated October 23, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pyrrho/>.

22 Pascal Massie, "Ataraxia: Tranquility at the End," in *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, eds. Sean D. Kirkland and Eric Sanday (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 246.

23 Emil Cioran, "A Bouquet of Heads," *The Hudson Review* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1962-1963): 492.

24 Dirk Baltzly, "Stoicism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, updated April 10, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/>.

25 Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

26 Massie, "Ataraxia," 251.

27 Cioran, "Bouquet," 495-96.

28 Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

29 Ibid.

30 Mother Teresa, "My Own Soul Remains in Deep Darkness," in *Mother Teresa, Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*, ed. Brian Kolodiejchuk (New York: Doubleday, 2007).

31 Cioran, "Bouquet," 496.

32 C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 153.

33 Quoted in Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 153.

34 Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Pelican Mentor Books, 1948), 2-3.

35 Whitehead, *Modern World*, 3.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 1.

38 Ibid., 2.

39 Ibid.

40 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

41 Ibid.

42 Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, "Nominalism in Metaphysics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated April 1, 2015, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nominalism-metaphysics/>.

43 Marjolein Oele, "Aristotle on Physis: Analyzing the Inner Ambiguities and Transgression of Nature," in A Companion to Ancient Philosophy, eds. Sean D. Kirkland and Eric Sanday (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 162.

44 Oele, "Aristotle on Physis," 162.

45 Gyula Klima, "The Medieval Problem of Universals," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated February 27, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/universals-medieval/>.

46 Ibid.

47 See, for example, David Myatt, "Understanding and Countering Muslim Extremism," David Myatt – Πάθει Μάθος, 2015, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/muslim-extremism.html>.

48 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

49 See David Myatt, "The Masculous Extremist," in Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination (CreateSpace, 2013), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/muslim-extremism.html>.

50 Ibid.

51 Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

52 Thomas Howard, "The Old Myth and the New," chap. 1 in Chance or the Dance? A Critique of Modern Secularism (1969; repr., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001).

53 Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections" (speech, Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg, Bavaria, Germany, September 12, 2006). The speech can be accessed here: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html).

54 Ibid.

55 Myatt, "Countering Muslim Extremism."

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/dwm-questions-2015.pdf> 59 David Myatt, "Far East," in Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life (CreateSpace, 2013), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/david-myatt-myingath.pdf>.

60 Myatt, "Toward First Love," in Myngath.

---

## Addendum

### Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

#### A Particular Perceivation

A certain misunderstanding of David Myatt's weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos seems to have arisen based on Myatt's use of terms such as acausal, abstractions, and denotatum {1} which does not seem to take into account matters such as the following:

1. That Myatt's weltanschauung was developed and refined over a period of some years (c.2011-2017) and was based primarily on his outré experiences over some four decades, which refinement led him to write in 2022 that

"my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology." {2}

In effect, his weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos is a mystical perceivation and not an academic philosophy. {3}

2. That his classification of his insights using terminology such as ontology, epistemology, and ethics - as in for example his statement that "the ontology of beings [...] is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis" {4} - is only a temporary guide for readers since his focus is primarily on empathy and pathei-



mathos as a means to knowing, both of which are personal, of the immediate moment, and which knowing, as he writes many times, cannot be extracted out from that personal experiencing to form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a denotata or some -ism or some -ology. {5}

That is, ontology itself is an abstraction, a denotatum, which empathy and pathei-mathos take us beyond. In this respect a simile might be Wittgenstein's 'ladder'.

3. That what applies to terminology such as ontology applies to his use of the acausal and his division of our physis, following his understanding of the Corpus Hermeticum, into masculous and muliebral. That they are also useful denotata to explain what is as it now is and has been but are ultimately discarded by the wordless knowing of empathy and pathei-mathos.

4. That his comparisons and examples derived from ancient Greek texts and philosophy - most of which he cites in Greek and provides his own translations - are of the insights of some others with which he finds some correlation with his own insights, eschewing as he does in his iconoclasm and resonance with Greco-Roman culture the modern practice in academia of citing works by philosophers of the past few centuries and more recent texts by academics.

### **The Mysticism Of Mr Myatt**

The statement by Myatt, quoted above, that his weltanschauung is his

"attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology," {2}

is a succinct description of his mysticism; that is, of his personal perceivation of what is conventionally termed 'Reality', of Being and of beings. Which perceivation is of the numinous capable of apprehension, sans denotata, by means of empathy and pathei-mathos, obviating the need for theos (a supreme divinity) and for theoi (the divinities of various ancient religions, pagan and otherwise) and obviating the need for not only ideologies of whatever kind but for religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism which rely on the interpretation, the exegesis, of some text or texts. {6}

For Myatt, this apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals through the compassion, humility, and tolerance born of empathy and through the fairness, the reasonableness, of personal honour.

As noted in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, empathy:

"inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to *directly perceive*, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." [My emphasis] {7}

Furthermore, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos {8} and that there is what Myatt terms a 'local horizon' to empathy:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu {9} of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." {10}

"[a]s a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {11}

In regard to the numinous Myatt writes:

"In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of a priori. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is

or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." {12}

Which brings us to what seems to be a neglected aspect of his weltanschauung: the natural balance, harmony, ἁρμονίη, for which he often uses the Taoist-derived term wu-wei which he defines as being "used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility." {13} That is, from the humility revealed by empathy.

His 2018 essay *Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture* elaborates on this notion of balance where he provides an example not only from Ancient Greece but from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum, and from Ficini's *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, written in Latin and published in 1489,

"Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona, 'How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned'.

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονίη and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner." {14}

Which ancient notion of καλὸς κάγαθός he mentions in his two 2017 monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {15} and which comportment succinctly describes how his weltanschauung could be manifest in the world.

### Gentlemanly And Lady-like Behaviour

As described earlier, Myatt's mystical apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals and this behaviour amounts to an individual comporting themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner; a comportment which has a long history in European culture from the idealized medieval chivalry of Morte Arthure to fictional Regency characters such as Mr Darcy, Elizabeth Bennet, Colonel Brandon, and Elinor Dashwood, to the 1940s Clive Wynne-Candy and Theo Kretschmar-Schuldorff.

In his 2014 essay *The Consolation Of A Viator*, Myatt indirectly references the character of Mr Darcy:

"For most of my life - and to paraphrase what someone once wrote - I have been a selfish being, prideful and conceited, and would still be so were it not for the suicide of a woman I loved." {16}

In the final paragraph of his autobiography *Myngath* he concludes that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all." {17}

Such personal sentiments ground, and in my view express the essence of, his weltanschauung and have apparently been somewhat neglected in discussions of Myatt's 'philosophy' of pathei-mathos. For it is not an academic philosophy divorced from the realities of human life but the life-experience of someone who, learning from both diverse experiences and decades of scholarly study, has distilled that learning into the understanding that in order to presence the numinous we do not need religions or any -ism or -ology or abstractions but have only to behave in a certain cultured way: with manners, fairness, honour, humility, and compassion.

Which attributes of personal character are, to use Myatt's term, descriptors not abstractions:

"A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy)." {13}

Hence why Myatt aptly describes his 'philosophy' as a "mystical individualistic numinous way," and as "the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way..." {18}

Morena Kapisiris  
June 2022

oooooo

{1} It should be noted that in many of his writings Myatt often idiosyncratically uses *denotatum* as an Anglicized term for both singular and plural instances. However, I shall use denotata for the plural and denotatum for the singular.

{2} *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/05/dwm-questions-may-22.pdf>

{3} We have appropriated the term 'perceiveration' from Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum where he explains that he uses it to translate the Greek term νοῦς in place of the conventional translation 'mind', explaining his reasons in his article *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* -

<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/concerning-ἀγαθός-and-voũç-in-the-corpus-hermeticum/> - and in his commentary on v.2 of the Poemandres tractate where he describes perceivance as:

"a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed the body." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{4} *Towards Understanding Physis*. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{5} See for example *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{6} In many of his writings Myatt has explained that the need for and practice of exegesis leads to suffering through reliance on a particular interpretation and through the conflict of competing interpretations which can lead to accusations of 'heresy'. See for example (i) the 2017 text *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/> and (ii) the 2019 text *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* which is included in his text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf> In his 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* - included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition - he wrote that the local horizon of empathy

"and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis. It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{7} included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, op.cit.

{8} *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, third edition, 2021, p.5. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

In his *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, Myatt writes that the third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy* provides "a reasonably comprehensive overview" of his weltanschauung.

{9} As often, Myatt uses an alternative spelling: here *purveu* (from Middle English) instead of the now conventional 'purview'. See *On Idiosyncratic Capitalization and Spelling*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/on-idiosyncratic-capitalization-and-spelling/>

{10} Included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf>

{11} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/>

{12} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{13} *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit.

{14} The essay is included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit. Myatt translates the quotation from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum as "A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings," writing in his commentary:

"That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{15} (i) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf> (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{16} The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{17} *Myngath*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

## David Myatt, Australian Interview, 2023

The interview was with an Australian-based investigative journalist of Serbian descent known by his moniker 'Interzone' who was also a former convert to Islam. We include as a relevant addendum Myatt's text *Analysing National Socialism* where he writes:

"There is thus, based on applying the moral criteria of The Numinous Way, a complete rejection by me of National-Socialism – of whatever kind – and an understanding of Hitler as a flawed individual who caused great suffering and whose actions and policies were dishonourable and immoral."

oooooo

### Part One

§ I know you supported the Taliban, and I wish to ask where did you go? Who did you meet? How long were you there? If vague answers must be made for security reasons I understand.

Yes I did support the Taliban during my Muslim years, with one of my writings in support of them - *The Significance of the Taliban for the Muslim Ummah* - apparently found by the CIA in the possession of Osama bin Laden following his killing by US Navy Seals in the Abbottabad compound in 2011. [1]

My travels in Muslim lands following my reversion in 1998 were briefly mentioned by Mark Weitzmann in a 2010 NATO publication [2] with one such travel summarized in my somewhat heretical text *Reflections on Islamic Travels* dated 2 Jumaada Al-Thaani 1424. Other than this I have as you anticipated no further comment to make.

§ It would not surprise me if you have had to quieten yourself by pressure from MI6, or use foreign intelligence agency's in the past.

My only overt contact with such agencies was following my arrest by Special Branch (SO12 as it then was, now part of SO15) in 1998 during one of several amiable meetings and conversations with an SO12 officer at which meeting another somewhat enigmatic person was present who I assumed was either MI5 or MI6. My assumption is and was that such agencies had me - have me? - under covert surveillance from at least 1997 during my involvement with Combat 18.

§ I wish to know your perspective of the current Taliban, as for the most part they consist of many original Taliban members.

My now "above Time" perspective is mostly the one I wrote about in that aforementioned writing but modified with the riders 'may be' and 'on balance': that, for Muslims, they may represent, on balance, the spiritual principle of Zuhd in dunya (zuhd ad-dunya) which principle of detachment from or a concern with material things is it seems alien to some in the modern materialistic West although kept alive by others in various spiritual forms and perhaps even in those who espouse certain environmental concerns about what the modern West has done and is doing in respect of Nature. In regard to spiritual forms I am reminded, in respect of Christianity, of Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn.

With "on balance" for (i) it seems that sometimes - but not always - there may be or may have been an excess of zeal by some and (ii) there is the question of Ijma regarding their interpretation of Quran and Sunnah, which consensus, according to my understanding, they did not and currently do not have possibly because they did not have time to develop and most certainly now, post-occupation, cannot yet develop an Emirate.

§ I know this is not confirmed: that you have "renounced Islam and all forms of Extremism".

What is or would be acceptable as confirmation? For myself, I can only suggest a reading of my post-2012 writings, such as *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*, [3] and what I endeavoured to express in my three 2022 interviews. [4]

ooo

### Part Two

§ Regarding Combat 18. When you left, especially becoming more deeply involved in Islam, were there ever any reprisals towards you?

No. Possibly because of two things. I kept certain channels of communication open particularly concerning Reichsfolk,

and, in anticipation of a forthcoming criminal trial following my arrest in 1998 by SO12, I was preparing a defence since their criminal investigation was ongoing only ending in the Summer of 2001 when I released from my bail after it was found that there was "insufficient evidence" to bring me to trial.

This preparation included having some of my National-Socialist writings re-issued, one of which was the essay *Why National-Socialism is Not Racist*, and another *The Theology Of National-Socialism: An Examination of National-Socialism, Christianity and Islam*, in which I had written,

Honour demands that we treat people, regardless of their race, their culture, their religion, their 'political views' with fairness and respect. That is, honour demands that we have manners and are polite: that we strive to act with nobility of character; that we judge people by their deeds and in particular by how they act toward us [...] It really is about time that we who uphold the noble way of life which is National-Socialism lived according to our own ethics and began to explain, openly and in clear words, the noble reality of National-Socialism. No matter how dire our situation may be, or appears to be, and no matter how many non-Aryans may live in what were once our own nations, we must hold fast to our own ethics and not allow ourselves be tricked into accepting the Zionist version of 'National Socialism' with its hate-filled, irrational, Hollywood 'nazis'. [5]

It was during this time that I wrote *The Question of National-Socialism, Racism and Tolerance* [6] which led me later that year (2001) to conceive a practical plan to try and bring National-Socialists and Muslims together in order to combat, in various ways, what I considered were our mutual enemies. In furtherance of which I wrote tracts such as the multipart *The National-Socialist Guide to Understanding Islam*, in which I broached the subject of 'martyrdom operations' by Muslims, the last edition of which 'guide' was published in 1424 AH. [6]

§ It seems that you and the O9A have been targeted as the "connection" between all these Neo-Nazi terrorist groups. It seems they have decided to choose you along with the O9A as the main driving force of these organisations. Allowing governments to use the O9A like they are trying to do in Australia, to by proxy drag in tens of Neo-Nazi and far-right groups into being designated as terrorist organisations. Do you feel this is the case?

This is an interesting question which I believe deserves a detailed reply especially as it links to one of the themes you are researching.

My personal perception is that 'the Establishment', of which anti-fascist groups such as 'Hope Not Hate' are now part of, have for several years been concerned about how the perception of National-Socialism is changing among sections of the Caucasian peoples of Europe and elsewhere. Changing away from the Establishment orthodoxy maintained since 1945 through an unprecedented propaganda campaign toward a historical revisionist understanding. That is, toward what is in practice now a heresy.

This concerns them as heresy always seems to concern religious and ideological cliques when they acquire power and influence with their response always seeming to be repression and, latterly, since the Middle Ages, censorship which in our modern societies involves a 'cancel culture' and introducing laws based on some manufactured abstraction such as "holocaust denial" which criminalizes the public expression of opinions about a particular matter which the Establishment does not approve of, just as zealous Protestants in England centuries ago criminalized the public expression of Catholic views and the performance of the Catholic Mass, and just as zealous 'revolutionaries' in 18th century France condemned and guillotined Catholic priests and nuns for being "anti-revolutionary" one of which acts was memorialised over a hundred and sixty years later by composer Francis Poulenc in his *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

A quite minor part of this new understanding, this new heresy, may have been what one antifascist described over two decades ago as my 'revisionist' version of National-Socialism with its emphasis on honour and what that implied in real life for modern National-Socialists. Hence my 1997 essay *The Disease of Suspicion* in which I wrote:

"There is a blight spreading on our noble Cause, a blight spread by our enemies. This blight, this spreading infection, is Suspicion.

This most usual and visible form which this infectious blight takes is: 'He/she is an agent/informer for the Police/the Government...' Sometimes, however, Suspicion is simply a rumour about a person's past or their personal character.

Our enemies have deliberately bred this infection of Suspicion to weaken us, to divide us among ourselves. They have found it be a powerful weapon in their fight against us, for many who are supposed to on our side in the war of freedom we are fighting have become infected with Suspicion, and go around infecting others with this blight, this poison. There is now almost a state of paranoia on our side, with people spreading rumours and allegations, and wondering whether a certain Comrade is really a government agent or an informer.

We must understand this - Suspicion is behaviour unbecoming a warrior. What is unbecoming for a warrior is what is dishonourable and unfair. It is dishonourable conduct and thus contemptible.

It is a betrayal of everything we stand for and believe in, as warriors. It is a betrayal of our noble ideal of loyalty, of comradeship. To spread Suspicion, to believe in rumours and allegations about individuals - however well-supported or 'documented' such rumours and allegations seem - is undignified, the sign of a weak character. It is a betrayal of our noble standards of personal conduct - a descent down toward the level

of the uncivilized people we despise and are fighting.

Suspicion is un-warrior like because a true warrior only and ever makes a personal judgement about any individual after having personally met that individual on a number of occasions because this is the honourable, the fair, thing to do. They have thus spent some time with that person and so therefore can make their own personal and direct assessment of the character of that individual. The warrior thing to do - not having met an individual and not having spent time with that individual - is to reserve one's judgement, and make no personal comment at all about the individual's character, motives or anything else.

Furthermore, any person who says or writes anything which calls into question the honour of any individual, must be prepared to face that individual and repeat the allegations, rumours or suspicion directly to that individual, and be prepared to fight that individual in a fair fight or a duel if the individual whose honour is brought into question desires to so defend his honour. This is the warrior thing to do, this is the honourable thing to do. Thus, anyone who raises doubts about a person, who spreads any rumour about them, or who is suspicious about the motives or the character of a person, must repeat any and all allegations to that person, face-to-face, and give that person a chance to defend themselves. Anything less is un-warrior like and cowardly.

To destroy this infection of Suspicion, this blight upon our Cause which is harming us and our fight for freedom, we have to do the honourable thing. The honourable thing to do is to maintain a dignified silence." [7]

This was at the time when former Combat 18 member Wilf Browning and his supporters were spreading rumours about Charlie Sargent, the founder of Combat 18. I had given Charlie and his brother Steve a personal pledge of loyalty, on my honour, so I naturally supported him. The crises led to Charlie's close friend Martin Cross killing a Browning supporter with both Martin and Charlie arrested for murder.

Browning then co-operated with the Police and testified against them at their criminal trial, leading me to publicly challenge him to a duel with deadly weapons. He dishonourably ignored the challenge and made jokes about it. Browning would later be lauded in book written by an anti-fascist and described as "a fearless fighter", as "revered in Europe" and as "loyal" when the exact opposite was true.

Such widely-read writings of mine, expounded in various essays and then in later editions of my The National-Socialist newsletter published in support of the National-Socialist Movement, quite naturally annoyed certain anti-fascists far more than I had annoyed them in the past by my 1970s street activism and by having my *Vindex - Destiny of the West* published in America in 1984 which was widely distributed around the world. [8]

An annoyance which seemed to me to have become a hatred because of my profuse 1990s writings concerning honour which rationally countered the Establishment version of 'nazism' which they had spent decades assiduously propagating; and because of my support of Combat 18 and of Charlie against Browning.

One anti-fascist in particular appeared to have a particular hatred of me resulting in a concerted campaign to publicly discredit me; someone now part of the Establishment having been awarded an MBE in 2016 by the then British government and appointed by them to be part of their Commission for Countering Extremism. Perhaps unsurprisingly this person was the author of the book that praised Browning.

This concerted smear campaign began with a special edition of the anti-fascist Searchlight magazine in 1998 headlined *The Most Evil Nazi In Britain* and included what one essayist termed The Infamous Post Box Interview. [9] As I wrote in *A Reply To Allegations*,

<quote> "For over twenty years, journalists, those opposed to National-Socialism, and dishonourable, egotistical weak-willed rumour-mongers among the so-called racial-nationalist 'Movement', have been circulating rumours and making allegations about my personal involvement with Occultism and Satanism. This is despite the fact that I have denied and do deny ever having been a 'Satanist', and despite the fact that I have stated many times that I regard Satanism as decadent and morally wrong. These rumours and allegations were started by, and are still circulated by, my enemies for one simple reason - to try and discredit me personally. For, if I can be discredited in such a way, people will not take seriously what I have written about National-Socialism and what I have done for this most noble of Causes. When I write or say that National-Socialism and the Occult are incompatible, I mean it. When I condemn Satanism as un-Aryan, as morally wrong, I mean it." [10] [11] </quote>

§ I am going into Combat 18 because this involvement during that period created the mythology of you. Inadvertently this mythologic view of you has been more influential than anything you have written. I see Combat 18 and the mess of the late 90s after the nail bombings as been the focal point that turned you from the person into the Idea. Does it feel that this Idea of you of which you have no control over is something you are trying to regain control?

The concepts of me as 'myth' and Idea are new to me and not something I agree with or am comfortable with. In 2021, when asked if I agreed with what one academic wrote, which was that I was "driven by a search for meaning and purpose, as well as an intellectual desire to find and create the all-encompassing and perfect political philosophy", I said I did not agree because

"during my National-Socialist decades I was driven by a somewhat fanatical desire to not only propagate what I then believed National-Socialism to be - an honourable, noble, way of life, a practical presencing of the

numinous - but also to recruit people to that cause in the hope of creating a National-Socialist society in the land of my ancestors [...] During my years as a Muslim I nurtured a similar desire to propagate what I then believed the Muslim way of life to be: which again was an honourable, noble, way of life, and a practical presencing of the numinous.

There was thus no search for 'meaning and purpose' because I foolishly believed I had already found a meaning and a purpose: for thirty years in National-Socialism and then for ten years in Islam. In 1998 I turned away from National- Socialism to Islam because during a decade (1988-1998) of foreign travels the culture, the Muslims, of the Muslim lands - and especially of Egypt - slowly, almost imperceptibly, impressed me as did, and perhaps more so, travels alone in the Sahara Desert where I wordlessly felt intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God." [12]

As I noted in Myngath, [13] "In a literal way, Islam taught me humility, something I aspired to during my time as a monk but which my then prideful nature rebelled against."

In essence, therefore, as I sought to explain in Myngath, I was an opinionated, selfish often fanatical person who from youth and for some thirty years arrogantly believed he could and should "make a difference" and who caused suffering to others but who, mostly against his will, slowly, very slowly seemed to learn from his experiential life in the process acquiring a certain humility and perhaps an understanding of himself leading to the formulation of a weltanschauungen based on empathy and honour.

Therefore trying to control such a myth and Idea is, for me, irrelevant.

§ The connections to the occult, Julius Evola and hermeticism seeming to be the most influential, along with old Greek and European pagan systems of honour. To put it simply [they] seem to be your main connection to the occult. I do not believe you are Anton Long, Some claim you infiltrated occult groups like the O9A to move them towards National Socialism. But the question I ask is has the Idea of you I keep mentioning that was seemingly created in the late 90s taken over again?

My interest in ancient Greek literature began as a schoolboy in the Far East but waned when I arrived in Blighty in the 1960s and became involved in practical politics, specifically Colin Jordan's British Movement. It returned when I was a monk and began learning what was then termed New Testament Greek. Discussions with two other monks led me to begin a scholarly study of the Greek text of the Corpus Hermeticum which I was familiar with from my reading of Jung and the few alchemical texts I could obtain while in prison in 1975 and which intuitively inspired the creation of my Star Game during that holiday at Her Majesty's Pleasure.

As for honour, what initially inspired me in the late 1960s were the actions of Otto Ernst Remer, a recipient of the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves, in July 1944. Some years later Remer presented me with a photograph of him taken after the battle of Kharkov in 1943.

In 2012, then over three score years old, I finally had leisure enough to begin translating and writing commentaries on the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum that most interested me.

What others may infer and have inferred from all this, they have and do. As for influence, I can only quote what TS Eliot wrote in Little Gidding:

If you came this way,  
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,  
At any time or at any season,  
It would always be the same: you would have to put off  
Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,  
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity  
Or carry report. You are here to kneel  
Where prayer has been valid.

ooo

### Part Three

§ Today I had an Ethiopian Muslim Uber driver, we talked about Islam; by the time I arrived at my appointment for the first time since disconnecting myself from Islam in 2020 during my divorce I was at a point where I wanted to run to the nearest Masjid, Prey and revert once more back into being a Muslim. I bring this up because this made me think of you and this was not only unexpected but an extreme longing to cast all aside and dedicate it all to Islam once more. Has this happened to you since you left Islam?

Yes, several times, in the year I publicly made known my own disconnection from the Muslim way of life. I missed daily Namaz, especially Jumma Namaz and the feeling of belonging and humility it had engendered in me. Suffice to say the Muslim way of life had a profound and positive, and in hindsight morally necessary, effect on me. But remembrance of the life and especially the deaths of Frances and Sue caused me to continue to seek answers to questions regarding exegesis of certain sacred texts, of the dialectic particular interpretations seemed to imply because they were founded on denotata, and the nature of empathy and honour which I felt had a personal horizon not



a supra-personal one codified by a religion or by a particular interpretation of some text.

§ During your time as a Muslim, many perceive that period as being some kind of O9A Insight role. I happened to believe you were sincere, given your writings, your obvious extensive knowledge of Islam and your assimilation into Muslim communities. Only a seasoned Foreign Intelligence Officer could do what you have done if you were not sincere. I understand this as I have travelled and lived in Islamic countries and communities overseas and they would have known very quickly if I was not sincere. In fact, it could have gotten me killed in some places. I want the above to be known as an example of your sincerity and how dangerous your travels less known could be. Reflecting about that period do you regret it?

What others believe or allege about my peregrinations as a Muslim, my rejection of all extremisms, and indeed about involvement with a particular Occult movement, is their belief or their allegation howsoever such a belief or allegation came-into-being and persists within them, and no longer concerns me.

My concern is, and has been for over a decade, seeking to not cause suffering through deeds or words, and finding something expiatory for the suffering I caused because of my past extremism and selfishness.

All I have found in respect of expiation in the past decade or so is to develop and make known the weltanschauung derived from what believe I have learned since the death of Frances in 2006; to publicly express my regret regarding my extremist past, and my fallible understanding of such matters as extremism.

What others believe or allege about such a making-known, such a weltanschauung, such an understanding, is what they believe or allege. Thus, in reference to sincerity, as Seneca wrote: Quia pars honesti non potest esse nisi honestum, nec summum bonum habebit sinceritatem suam, si aliquid in se viderit dissimile meliori. [14] Which returns me to what I wrote in 2012: "quite simply it is matter of honour. Of personal knowing," and that since 1975

"only four people, on hearing or learning about such rumours and allegations, have had the decency to ask me, in person, 'for my side of the story'. The first was Colin Jordan, the second was John Tyndall, the third was Steve Sargent, and the fourth was a Muslim whom I came to greatly admire and to whom I gave a personal pledge of loyalty." [15]

All those individuals took the trouble to get to know me personally over a period of time, and it was that personal pledge of loyalty to a Muslim living overseas that made my interior struggle about formulating my own weltanschauung longer and more difficult than it might otherwise have been.

§ Leaving Islam can be dangerous, you and I are both apostates from Islam, of which in most schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence carries the death penalty. As I asked regarding Combat 18 and NS movements possibly taking reprisals, of which you illuminated me on the situation. I must ask has there been any reprisals attempted towards you by Islamic groups or individuals because of being seen as an apostate?

Not so far. As Sophocles wrote: ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγή. [16]

§ Regarding extremism, for most people who become radical from various movements, most do not move from theory into practice of views western society perceives as extreme. You however took that extra step, and despite not agreeing on certain things, I do respect that you went all in putting forth your convictions publicly given the risks involved. Knowing the stakes, you were not typical regarding the movements you were involved with. Regarding acting on beliefs (not necessarily extremism but any counter establishment ideology) do you believe that one must act on their convictions as you did, or is the personal suffering it causes to themselves and others as you reflected on too great to risk?

A relevant question. During my extremist decades I did believe it was necessary to act in practical ways based on one's often fanatical commitment to some ideology or some supra-personal religious or social Cause and which commitment meant that the goal of some ideology or Cause was considered more important than the suffering caused.

But my experiences, and especially outdoor labour on a farm, gradually over years, brought the realization that this was immoral and that no ideology, no -ism, no Cause, no religion, nothing supra-personal - whatever the rhetoric or written or interior excuse - justified causing suffering and thus perpetuating the cycle of suffering, millennia after millennia. That what was moral was, could be, known through empathy and honour with their local personal horizon; and could not be, should not be, codified in any supra-personal way such as in a principle such as Jus Ad Bellum. I attempted to explain all this in my 2013 text Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God [17] and later works.

§ Regarding Reichsfolk and the changing of National Socialist Ideology during the mid-1990s to the 2000s. You and a few other figures quite heretically moved from Neo-Nazi orthodoxy. Especially changing the perspective regarding Islam. Utilizing a historical precedent of Islamic collusion with the Nazi party before and during the war and the Islamic SS units, the Bosnian SS been an example you used. How did people within the NS movement react to this, as despite the historical precedent Islam has been a focal point of attack by Neo-Nazi organisations for decades, Combat 18 in Australia focused almost entirely on fighting Islam. What was the reaction?

The reaction of some people, especially in Finland, Sweden, and Germany, was positive while there was a negative reaction in places such as America and Britain. As for Combat 18 in Britain it had effectively, in terms of street action, ceased to exist mostly due to Charlie's conviction for murder and Browning's betrayal by being a witness for the Prosecution at his trial; but partly because so many seemed to dishonourably believe the disinformation, the lies, about



Charlie spread by Browning and his supporters, and by anti-fascists such as in a World in Action television programme whose anti-fascist Associate Producer would later be fêted by the British government who awarded him an MBE. The programme, as some newspaper articles did, spread the disinformation that Charlie was a informer for the Police and for MI5.

Apropos Islam, I went on, during my campaign to bring National-Socialists and Muslims together, to write tracts such as the multi-part *The National-Socialist Guide to Understanding Islam*. Which again were well-received in some quarters but disliked in others.

§ Continuing on from Reichsfolk, you and figures like Varg Vikernes during that period of the late 1990s, changed perspectives on Slavic races, Russians and Serbians being a good example as they are hated by orthodox Nazis given Hitler's writings on them in *Mein Kampf*. What changed your mind on ethnic Slavs? For bringing Slavs into NS movements has changed things dramatically. Being from a Serb background and having friends who joined Combat 18 and other NS movements, I was a cause of much argument between Neo-Nazis, this was the late 2000s. Most were very orthodox but some like yourself had or developed different perspectives. Unlike with Islam there is less of a historical precedent regarding Russians and Serbs, but I know there was some especially during the end of the war. But I won't go into that; my point is, I know things have changed regarding Slavs in some movements, so how or what caused your perspective to change?

Apropos Slavs, the reason was my understanding of National-Socialism as applicable to all ethnicities, not just to Northern Europeans; a matter I wrote about many times including in *Esoteric Hitlerism: Idealism, the Third Reich and the Essence of National-Socialism*.

Apropos Islam, there were two reasons. The first was my travels in Egypt and the Muslim world between 1988 and 1998 which began my admiration for the Muslim way of life. The second was being introduced to National Socialists such as Leon Degrelle and Otto Ernst Remer. Remer, for example, lived for a while after the war in Egypt and became adviser to Gamal Abdel Nasser, was acquainted with Yasser Arafat and a comrade of Omar Amin, a Waffen-SS officer living in Egypt who had converted to Islam.

§ Regarding the occult, I am satisfied with your answer, the old Greek translations, your background regarding Christianity, interest in Hermeticism it all makes sense. To me it seems people involved in the O9A have incorporated your work into their material. I do not believe you are the person the media and misdirected Niners think you are. As you said Satanism is Decadent, and you are right, I talk about it a lot especially regarding the French late 1800s decadent literary movement with books like *Là-Bas* by Joris-Karl Huysmans. It does not fit in with your NS or Islamic work. Am I correct on this perspective?

Indeed. But that will not of course change the opinion of those who for whatever reason and from whatever motive believe otherwise. I have expressed my views regarding the Occult and alleged involvement with a certain Occult movement many times since the 1990s, including in the tract *Occultism and National-Socialism* first published in New Zealand in 1997, in my *A Reply To Allegations* which I quoted from in a previous answer, in a 1998 recorded interview with the aforementioned antifascist fêted by the British government, and in my 2012 *A Matter Of Honour*. [15]

But, as I have mentioned before in other writings, they and their perception are of this era, and in the perspective of millennia the perception of a person by others often changes or more often perhaps the person will be forgotten, whatever efforts those of this or any era may go to in the belief that their particular perception will last 'forever'.

§ To quote you in a difficult question: "The concepts of me as 'myth' and Idea are new to me and not something I agree with or am comfortable with." I find your reaction to the concept I put forth of you becoming a myth very interesting. But because of the media attention people on many sides have this absolutely bizarre perspective of you. Many thinking you're a secret O9A founder who is also Anton Long and doing Insight roles since the 60s. I have met people who believe this and admire you because of this belief. Then the mainstream media perspective is essentially the same, like it or not, but I hope to bring this back to reality with this interview. Is there any statement you may like to make?

Being now past my three score years and ten I have lost interest in how or why I am now perceived as I am by some people or may be perceived after my death. But, such is the nature of some older folk, to reminisce about one's past, and to pontificate in general, often is or becomes a minor pleasure.

Yet, as it often is, the final verdict on a person will be centuries from the era in which they lived, if they are remembered at all for whatever reason and, if they are remembered, in the intervening period the verdict may change from century to century.

But this is all dependant on whether and for how long we as a species survive and whether or not in a hundred or a thousand years there are stable communities where knowledge and reason and scholarship are valued and taught to a new generation.

David Myatt  
March 2023 CE

## Footnotes

URL's valid as of March 2023

[1] CIA archive: <https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound>. The original text is at <http://tinyurl.com/22zb4389>

The original is at: [https://web.archive.org/web/20080611081331/http://www.davidmyatt.info/significance\\_taliban.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20080611081331/http://www.davidmyatt.info/significance_taliban.html)

[2] Mark Weitzmann, *Anti-Semitism and Terrorism*, in Diemel, Hans-Liudger (ed), *Terrorism and the Internet: Threats, Target Groups, Deradicalisation Strategies*. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series, vol. 67. IOS Press, 2010. pp.16-17.

[3] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[4] <https://www.davidmyatt.info/dm-three-interviews.pdf>

[5] *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-ns-writings/myatt-ns-writings.pdf>

[6] The article is available in *National-Socialism and Islam: The Case for Co-Operation*, <https://cosmicreich.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/ns-islam.pdf>

[7] The article is quoted in Rachael Stirling's 2021 monograph *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-peregrinations-ideologist/dm-ns-ideologue-second-edition.pdf>

[8] *Vindex - Destiny of the West*, a facsimile at <https://archive.org/download/myatt-vindex-destiny-west/myatt-vindex-destiny-west.pdf>

[9] The item is from Part Two of *Modern Tale Of An Antifascist Propagandist*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/a-modern-tale.pdf>

[10] The essay A Reply to Allegations is included in *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-ns-writings/myatt-ns-writings.pdf>

[11] See also the 1997 essay *Occultism and National-Socialism*, [https://archive.org/download/myatt-occult-ns\\_202303/myatt-occult-ns.pdf](https://archive.org/download/myatt-occult-ns_202303/myatt-occult-ns.pdf)

[12] Three Interviews, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/dm-three-interviews.pdf>

[13] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-mynagath.pdf>

[14] De Vita Beata, 7.15.1

[15] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

[16] Antigone, 1337-8, "mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate."

[17] Included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

o o o o o o o

## Addendum

### David Myatt: Analysing National Socialism

Two essays - both written in January 2012 and titled *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism and Hitler, National-Socialism, and Politics: A Personal Reappraisal* - are relevant for those interested in Myatt's rejection of extremism and in his current views regarding Hitler and nazism.

As he noted in 2014, his

"writings, post-2011, were and are really dialogues: interiorly with myself and externally with a few friends or the occasional person who has contacted me and expressed an interest." [2]

In his *Letter To My Undiscovered Self*, published in 2012, he wrote:

"That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover [such] simple truths surely

reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for. Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that, I love delicate softness:

For me, love has brought the brightness  
And the beauty of the Sun....

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings." [3]

Myatt ends by writing:

"There is thus, based on applying the moral criteria of The Numinous Way, a complete rejection by me of National-Socialism – of whatever kind – and an understanding of Hitler as a flawed individual who caused great suffering and whose actions and policies were dishonourable and immoral"

The source of the two texts is <https://web.archive.org/web/20221102053427/https://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-problems-ns.pdf>

ooo

[1] Dated, because many of the texts referenced in these old essays are to Myatt's pre-2012 'numinous way' and which texts are now only available in archived versions of his website and weblog, such as at  
(i) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130602171008/http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/> and  
(ii) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130704131205/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

[2] *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/questions-for-dwm-2014/>

[3] The letter was included in his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

The translation of part of a fragment of a poem by Sappho is by Myatt, with the Greek text (P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) number 1787, fr. 1 and 2) being ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καὶ μοι τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε

ooo

## Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism

### Introduction

This essay is a brief analysis of the National-Socialist weltanschauung, as manifested in National-Socialist Germany, and according to the philosophical and ethical criteria of my Numinous Way, and which criteria derive from the principles of empathy, compassion, and personal honour.

Empathy, as understood by my philosophy of The Numen [1], establishes a particular ontology and epistemology; Being, the source of beings, as both causal and acausal, and of an acausal knowing distinct from the causal knowing of conventional philosophy and empirical science [2]. The ethical criteria are manifest in both compassion and honour [3], so that:

"the morality of The Numinous Way is therefore defined by a personal honour, a personal compassion, and the personal virtue of justice. For justice is not some abstract concept, but rather a personal virtue, as εὐταξία is a personal virtue. For justice is the personal virtue of fairness; the quality of balance." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

The National-Socialism evident in NS Germany was a way of life centred around concepts such as duty, kampf, nation, and race. Thus, the individual was judged by, and expected to judge others by, the criteria of race, with particular races assigned a certain value (high or low), as individuals were judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land, their people) and the race they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, kampf between individuals, races, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

### Collectivism, Nationalism, and Race

The National-Socialist way of life was – given such concepts as kampf, nation and race – a collective one, with one of the highest virtues being the willingness of individuals, if necessary, to sacrifice their own happiness and welfare, and even their lives, for the good of their people, their land, their race. The necessity of this virtue was explained, in part, by the belief that the German volk had an historic mission, a particular destiny, so that – coupled with the ideas of race and kampf – the individual was expected to define themselves, to understand themselves, as Germans and as having

particular duties and obligations; in effect, to replace their own self-identity with the collective identity of the volk.

In order to establish, maintain, and expand this collectivism, certain measures were regarded as necessary, as morally correct, with such measures including military conscription, laws designed to criminalize certain activities, both political and personal, and harsh punishment of those contravening such laws.

In addition, the führerprinzip was applied to most aspects of life, with individuals expected to accept and obey the authority so established, since such authority was considered to manifest the will, the ethos, of the volk. Hence the loyalty individuals gave, as an expression of their recognized duty as Germans, was personal; not to 'the State' nor even to 'the nation', and certainly not to some government, but rather to individuals who were regarded as embodying the will, the identity, of the volk. In practice, this meant Adolf Hitler and those appointed by him or by his representatives, and it was this collectivism, this binding of the volk by the führerprinzip, that Heidegger tried to philosophically express in his now controversial remarks regarding the Volksgemeinschaft and by quoting some words attributed to Aeschylus [4].

There are thus six elements that, from the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way, may be said to define the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler. These are:

- (i) a collective identity and its acceptance;
- (ii) authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority;
- (iii) mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority;
- (iv) the use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth;
- (v) the use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity; and
- (vi) the use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – kampf – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

### **Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler**

In purely practical terms, the acceptance and use of the principle of kampf together with the acceptance of Hitler as embodying the collective will of the volk, inevitably led to the military defeat of NS Germany. For all mortals are fallible and military defeat is always inevitable, given time and even if such a defeat has internal, not external, causes. For tyrants and monarchs die, are overthrown, or are killed; Empires flourish for a while – a few centuries perhaps, at most – and then invariably decline and fade away; oligarchies come and go with monotonous regularity, lasting a decade or perhaps somewhat longer; rebellions and revolutions will break out, given sufficient time, and will often succeed given even more time – decades, centuries – and even following repeated and brutal repression.

Thus, philosophically, the general error here by Hitler and his followers was the obvious one of ὕβρις. A lack of understanding, an unknowing, of the natural balance – of δίκη - as well as a lack of empathy, manifest as this unknowing, this lack, was in the arrogant belief of a personal and a volkish 'destiny' combined with a belief in kampf as a natural and necessary expression of human nature. And ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον - that is, ὕβρις plants, is the seed of, the τύραννον. Thus, symbolically, we might justifiably say that the Ἐρινύες took their revenge, for Hitler and his followers had forgotten, scorned, or never known the wisdom, the truth, that their fallible mortal lives are subject to, guided by, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5].

Thus their fate was destined, a fate that Sophocles expressed so well in respect of Oedipus, tyrannus:

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,  
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,  
οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,  
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.  
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν  
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν  
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγυνὸν παθῶν. [6]

In effect, therefore, and in general terms, the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler was un-wise; based on a misunderstanding of human nature, and he himself shown, despite his remarkable achievement of gaining power, as lacking a reasoned, a well-balanced, judgement [σωφρονεῖν] – since such a balanced judgement would, as Aeschylus explained in the Oresteia, reveal that πόλεμος [7] always accompanies ὕβρις and that only by acceptance of the numinous authority of πάθει μάθος (the new law presented to mortals by immortal Zeus) could the tragic cycle of ἔρις be ended.

### **A Numinous View of The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler**

Let us now consider the six points enumerated above, in respect of the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way. As mentioned in my essay *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*:

"The essence of the numinous view – of the ethical way posited by the Philosophy of The Numen – is empathy and thus the acausal (the affective and effecting) connexion we, as individuals, are to all life, sentient and otherwise, with empathy being the foundation of our conscious humanity.

The practical criteria which empathy implies is essentially two-fold: the criteria of the cessation of suffering, and the criteria of the individual, personal, judgement in the immediacy of the moment. For the Philosophy of The Numen, these two criteria manifest the natural character of rational, conscious, empathic, human beings and thus express the nature of our humanity and of human culture, and which nature is manifest in a practical way in compassion and in personal honour.

Hence these two criteria are used, by The Numinous Way – by the Philosophy of The Numen – to judge our actions, our personal behaviour, and also all the abstractions we manufacture or may manufacture and which thus affect us, as individuals."

(i) A collective identity and its acceptance.

Empathy, as a natural if still under-used and under-developed human faculty, is only and ever individual and of the immediacy of the living moment. [8] It is always personal, individual, and cannot be abstracted out from an individual living being – that is, it cannot have any causal ideation or be represented by or expressed by someone else.

There is the personal, individual, freedom that the knowing that empathy uniquely presents to the individual, and therefore no need of, no sense of, belonging to other than one's immediate surroundings, and no sense of identity beyond the personally known, for all human beings encountered are encountered and empathically known as they uniquely are: as individuals with their own lives, feelings, hopes, and with their own potential and their own past.

Which in essence means The Numinous Way is the way of individuals, and an individual manner of living to be accepted or rejected according to the individual. Thus such a collective identity – and a desire for and acceptance of such an identity – is contrary to this very individual numinous way.

What matters for The Numinous Way is the individual; their empathy, their honour; their personal judgement. What does not matter are supra-personal manufactured abstractions such as a 'nation'. Consequently, the empathic, honourable, individual only has a duty to themselves, to their immediate kin, and to those personally given a pledge of loyalty: not a duty or obligations to some manufactured collective identity however such identity be expressed.

(ii) Authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority.

As I wrote in *Authority and Legitimacy in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*:

"For The Numinous Way, it is the exercise of the judgement of the individual – arising from the use of empathy and the guidance that is personal honour – that is paramount, and which expresses our human nature.

That is, it is honour, the understanding that empathy provides, and the judgement of the individual, that are legitimate, moral, numinous, and thence the basis for authority. This means that authority resides in and extends only to individuals – by virtue of their honour, their empathy, and manifest in their own personal judgement, and therefore this always personal individual authority cannot be abstracted out from such personal judgement of individuals. In practical terms, this is a new type of authority – that of the individual whose concern is not power over others but over themselves, and which type of power is manifest in a living by honour, and thence in their self-responsibility and in how they interact with others."

Thus, such non-individual authority, acceptance of and obedience to such authority, is contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iii) Mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority.

Given that, for The Numinous Way, authority and justice are individual and manifest in individual judgement and through personal honour, such mandatory punishment by some abstract authority is quite contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iv) The use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth.

According to both empathy and honour, such a judgement of others, such prejudice, on the basis of some abstraction such as perceived race or 'nationality' is immoral [9]. The only moral, honourable, criteria is to judge individuals as individuals, sans all abstractions, on the basis of a personal knowing of them extending over a duration of causal Time. To judge en masse, without such a direct, personal, extended, personal knowing of each and every individual is reprehensible.

In addition, it is immoral – unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable – to treat people on the basis of their assumed or alleged race or nationality. Thus, the enforced herding of people into 'concentration camps' on the basis of alleged, assumed, race or nationality is quite unjustifiable, inhuman.

(v) The use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity.

Such abstractions included 'blood' and nationality, so that identity became a matter of individuals being classified – by themselves, others, and by the State – according to certain chosen abstract criteria based on 'race' and heritage. Thus there were distinct notions, distinct levels, of separateness.

Empathy, however, presents us with an acausal-knowing of life, human and otherwise, and this knowing is of ourselves as but one fallible, biologically fragile, mortal, microcosmic nexion, and thus of how our self, our perceived and singular separate self-identity, is appearance and not an expression of the true nature of our being [10], which nature is one of connexions, between living emanations, not one of separations.

Such a revealing of our nature reveals that we should act with empathy and honour in the knowledge that our actions affect others or can affect others, directly, indirectly, emotionally, and acausally. That their joy, their pain, their suffering, their fate is ours by virtue of us as a connexion to them – as a connexion to all life; as one emanation of ψυχή [11].

What abstractions do is that they conceal our true empathic, compassionate, honourable nature and, ultimately, sever the connexion we are to ψυχή, to The Numen.

As mentioned in *On The Nature of Abstractions*:

"The error of abstractionism – of using existing abstractions and manufacturing other abstractions and using these as the source of ethics, of judgement, and so ascribing a value to them – is the error of ὕβρις (hubris). That is, the error of unbalance: of neglecting or being unaware of empathy, and of neglecting or being unaware of or profaning the numinous. In the personal and social sense, ὕβρις is revealed in a lack of compassion, a lack of balanced reasoning, and not only ascribing to one's self (or some other abstraction, such as a nation-State) what is assumed to be the perfection of right and of good (or the best current approximation of it) but also acting on that presumption to the detriment, the harm, of others.

This is unethical – as all abstractions are inherently unethical – because what is ethical is determined by empathy, and thus cannot be abstracted out of that direct, immediate, and personal knowing which presences empathy in us, as human beings."

(vi) The use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – kampf – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

As mentioned previously, in the *Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler* section, kampf as principle, as abstraction, is a manifestation of the error of ὕβρις and of a lack of empathy.

For empathy, and the cultivation of σωφρονεῖν, incline us toward – or should incline us, as individuals, toward – a letting-be; to wu-wei; to a living in the immediacy-of-the-moment. To being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being.

In addition:

"In The Numinous Way, a distinction is made between war and combat in that combat refers to gewin – similar to the old Germanic werra, as distinct from the modern krieg. That is, combat refers to a more personal armed quarrel between much smaller factions (and often between just two adversaries – as in single combat, and trial by combat) when there is, among those fighting, some personal matter at stake or some personal interest involved, with most if not all of those fighting doing so under the leadership of someone they personally know and respect and with the quarrel usually occurring in the locality or localities where the combatants live.

Thus, war is contrary to The Numinous Way – to the Cosmic Ethic – not only because of the impersonal suffering it causes, but also because it is inseparably bound up with individuals having to relinquish their own judgement, with them pursuing some lifeless un-numinous abstraction by violent means, and with the development of supra-personal abstract and thus un-numinous notions of 'justice' and law.

Hence, there is, for The Numinous Way, no such thing as a 'just war' – for war is inherently unjust and un-numinous. What is just and lawful are honourable individuals and their actions, and such combat as such individuals may honourably and personally undertake, and such violence as they may honourably and of necessity employ in pursuit of being fair and ensuring fairness." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

## Conclusion

It should thus be quite clear why The Numinous Way is contrary to and incompatible with the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler that was manifest in National-Socialist Germany.

January 2012

Revised JD2455956.107

## Notes

[1] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen* and also *The Natural Balance of Honour – Honour, Empathy, and Compassion in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*, from which this is a quote:

"As used and defined by The Numinous Way, empathy – ἐμπάθεια – is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as

envisaged by The Numinous Way, it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings – and thus differs in nature from compassion."

[2] See: (i) *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*; (ii) *Some Notes Concerning Causality, Ethics, and Acausal Knowing*; (iii) *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality*.

[3] qv. *The Natural Balance of Honour*.

[4] In his 1933 speech at the University of Freiburg, where he quoted the following verse (v.514) from Prometheus Bound [my translation] –

τέχνη δ' ἀνάγκης ἀσθενεστέρα μακρῶ.

How so very feeble Craft is before Compulsion!

[5]

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.  
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?  
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 515-6 [My translation]

[6]

You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus, He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man: What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy? But what a tide of problems have come over him! Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals, To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until, Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.

Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 1524-1530 [My translation]

[7] In respect of πόλεμος see my *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic* where I suggest that as used by Heraclitus it implies neither kampf nor conflict, but rather – as a quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests – what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being. πόλεμος is thus that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, and also that which manifests as δίκη and accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being (become bound together – be whole – again) by enantiodromia.

[8] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*

[9] See *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race* and also *On The Nature of Abstractions*.

[10] Refer for example to *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality* and also *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*.

[11] Correctly understood – and as evident by the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, et al – ψυχή implies Life qua being.

ooo

## **Hitler, National-Socialism, and Politics A Personal Reappraisal**

### **Introduction – A Moral Perspective**

Almost exactly a year ago, I perhaps somewhat presumptuously, temerarily, penned a rather long essay entitled *The Uncertainty of Knowing* in reply to questions asked of me in relation to National-Socialism, Hitler, and my philosophy of The Numinous Way; and which essay itself was an attempt to elucidate another essay, the year before that, concerning Reichsfolk and a Muslim Khilafah. As I wrote at the beginning of my reply in *The Uncertainty of Knowing*:

"There are interesting, important and rather complex philosophical and ethical issues here, that require detailed, serious, and above all, rational, consideration. To explain, in a satisfactory manner, these issues and offer satisfactory answers would perhaps require a philosophical treatise of length equal to a book, and I have to admit that I currently possess no desire to write such a book, partly because I am aware that I may not have all or even many of the answers required, and that such answers as I do have, or some of them, might be erroneous and that therefore may need to be amended. Therefore, all I can do here is try in a rather unsatisfactory way to summarize such answers, such views, of mine."

In *The Uncertitude*, the title itself reflecting my concern and approach, I continued to emphasize that my replies were tentative and I – as a result of *πάθει μάθος*, of acknowledging my *ὑβρις* of decades – was open to correction and to further learning.

Over the past year I have continued to study, research, and reflect upon these 'complex philosophical and ethical issues' and have had cause, as I anticipated, to amend my conclusions, especially those in respect of National-Socialism, Hitler, and Reichsfolk, some of which new conclusions I have briefly mentioned in my essay, published this month, *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*, and which new conclusions led me to withdraw *The Uncertitude of Knowing*.

This further study and research, perhaps wyrdfully, included getting to know people who shared their personal and familial experiences of National-Socialist Germany with me, with these experiences being of those who were the subject of the Nürnberger Gesetze and who thus traumatically endured the consequences of those laws and the prejudice and hatred they codified. These direct experiences of the personal and moral effects of National-Socialism were those of individuals that I, through a personal knowing of them, considered to be honourable and which personal experiences thus served to place into perspective, into a moral – a numinous – perspective, the accounts given to me, decades earlier, of some German National-Socialists I had met who fought for and gave their loyalty to Adolf Hitler and which accounts had been formative of what became my decades-long dedication to the cause of National-Socialism, a dedication broken only by my personal experiences of Islam and by the *πάθει μάθος* that was the genesis of my philosophy of The Numinous Way.

As I mentioned in *The Uncertitude of Knowing*:

"All I know – all I say and write – derives from my own diverse personal experiences and my reflexion upon such experiences; from my experience of diverse ways of life, diverse religions, and by my interaction with individuals..."

Suffice therefore to say that my new encounter and interaction with particular people, my reflexion on those experiences, and my further study and research, has led me to a new personal learning, and to a better understanding of both the ethics of The Numinous Way and of the personal, the moral, implications of those ethics.

However, it is to be expected that some people will not like – nor others understand – where this new learning and my thinking have led me and may be leading me. But as TS Eliot beautifully expressed it in his poem *Little Gidding*:

And what you thought you came for  
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning  
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled If at all. Either you had no purpose  
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured  
And is altered in fulfilment.

## **Ethical Consequences**

Empathy – as outlined in various essays including Introduction to *The Philosophy of The Numen* and *The Natural Balance of Honour* – is the basis for the ethics of The Numinous Way, with compassion and a personal honour being how we can, personally as individuals, be ethical in accord with the knowing, the understanding, the insight, that empathy reveals. This empathic revealing is of our affective and effecting connexion to other life, including human beings.

The immediacy of empathy in the living moment means a living-in, a dwelling-in, the moment, inclining us toward to wu-wei and, "to being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being." *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*

There therefore cannot be, as mentioned in *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*, any desire for involvement with politics, since

"the goals, objectives and aims of politics are, by their very nature, based on human-manufactured divisions and categories deriving from a causal separation of beings: that is, which involve denoting individuals on the basis of some principle of inclusion/exclusion, and which principle of inclusion/exclusion (of separation of human beings) is immoral because un-numinous."

What is thus important, moral, numinous, are individuals who – feeling, knowing, suffering and its causes – live and who act with personal compassion and personal honour, with the boundary, the horizon, of such acts being, by the nature of empathy, of the nexion they are, and only and ever of the personal, immediate, local kind. In practical terms, there are and cannot be any supra-personal causes, agendas, aims, goals, for such things take us toward abstractions and beyond the bounds of empathy and of how The Numen is or becomes presenced in and through the personal experiencing of, an interaction with, other living beings: human, of Nature, of the Cosmos; and a personal experiencing which is direct, unfettered, undistorted, by any abstraction, by any prejudice, by any division – conscious or unconscious – into 'us' and 'the separate others'.

A consequence of this is that we can only – without causing more suffering or contributing to suffering – alleviate suffering, try to ameliorate what is wrong, by means of personal, direct, compassionate, honourable, acts when we



personally encounter suffering, dishonour. No cause, no movement, whether deemed political, social, or religious – nothing supra-personal involving us surrendering our individual judgement of empathy, our individual authority, and our personal honour – can alleviate suffering or ameliorate what is wrong, dishonourable, for such supra-personal things are among the causes of suffering or contribute to or will contribute to suffering, given our past and current human nature.

Hence the only moral change, the only revolution, that is possible – numinous, good – is that of ourselves; within and personal; and this is a reformation of ourselves and then our living of a moral, of an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life.

This precludes the possibility of such a moral individual supporting some cause, some group, some movement, some person, in the belief that such a cause, group, movement, or 'leader', can 'make a difference' or can or might in some way move us toward some future where there is less suffering.

Thus it is morally wrong – from the perspective of The Numinous Way – to suggest, as for example I previously did in *The Uncertainty of Knowing*, that a group such as Reichsfolk or a way such as Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jammah might be alternatives "capable of guiding honourable individuals to do what is honourable", and thus have "the ability to alleviate at least some of the suffering which blights this world." And wrong not only because such groups, such ways, are based on immoral abstractions – on principles of inclusion/exclusion – but also because their very nature, their very being, as groups and such ways are incompatible with The Numen, and so cannot and do not in any way presence the numinous or express the numinous since such numinosity only lives, dwells, is manifest – in the personal sense – by individuals leading or inclining toward leading an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life.

In brief, it is personal virtues such as εὐταξία – and their cultivation by individuals – which are important, required, moral, not some group, some organization, some 'leader', or some political aims and goals.

### **Adolf Hitler and National-Socialism**

For a long time, I regarded Adolf Hitler as a good man, an honourable man, and National-Socialism – especially my 'revised version' of National-Socialism manifest in Reichsfolk – as either an intimation of the numinous or as an expression of what is noble and honourable.

Now, in respect of Hitler, I ask two questions: (1) 'what is good' and my answer, manifest in The Numinous Way, is that what is good is what is compassionate; what alleviates suffering; what does not cause or contribute to suffering; what manifests love, empathy; and (2) 'what is honourable' and my answer is what is dignified, what manifests self-control, fairness; a balanced judgement.

How then does Hitler fare according to these criteria? Do his actions – manifest for example in the Nürnberger Gesetze and their consequences, in his use of krieg in pursuit of some supra-personal aim, and in the use of the abstractions of race and nation – reveal a man of compassion, of balanced judgement, of fairness? Someone who feels and understands the error that is ὕβρις and is therefore circumspect, in touch with and respectful of the numinous? Who knows the limits of appropriate human behaviour? No.

For example, there is nothing honourable in the Nürnberger Gesetze and their consequences; in the personal suffering, the deaths, they caused, in the prejudice and the hatred they engendered and codified. Nothing good in the use of krieg in pursuit of some supra-personal aim; in the suffering and the deaths caused. Nothing good or honourable in the demand for obedience and in the manipulation of people's emotions by rhetoric and propaganda; nothing good or honourable in the punishment of those who were inclined, as is morally right and justified, not to surrender their individual judgement and who thus refused to be obedient in such supra-personal matters, especially in relation to certain 'political' abstractions, such as 'race', nation, and the führerprinzip.

As someone once wrote: "Das war ein Vorspiel nur, dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen."

In respect of National-Socialism – new or old – I now ask similar questions to the ones asked in respect of Hitler. That is, can The Numen, the good, what is honourable, empathic, compassionate – what is moral – be manifest in, be presenced by, such a weltanschauung as National-Socialism? No.

No, for two simple reasons.

(i) Because such a weltanschauung has its very being in immoral abstractions, be they termed 'race', nation, volk, ethnicity, folk, or whatever; and is defined by the principle of inclusion/exclusion, by the separation and prejudgement of human beings by abstract criteria.

(ii) Because such a weltanschauung by its very nature is supra-personal, organized, authoritative, dogmatic, and numinosity only lives, dwells, is manifest – in the personal sense – by individuals leading or inclining toward leading an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life where there is no need of any authority, any judgement, any criteria, other than their own, deriving from their empathy and their unique πάθει μάθος.

There is thus, based on applying the moral criteria of The Numinous Way, a complete rejection by me of National-Socialism – of whatever kind – and an understanding of Hitler as a flawed individual who caused great suffering and whose actions and policies were dishonourable and immoral.

## Conclusion

The Numinous Way is, and can only ever be, an individual way; a non-political, non-religious, choice of individuals desirous of developing and using empathy and hopeful of leading honourable lives that do not cause or contribute to the suffering of living beings. Lives where one of the greatest virtues – a manifestation of our humanity – is considered to be a loyal and personal love between two human beings, regardless of the perceived or assumed ethnicity, nationality, social status, or 'sexual orientation', of the individuals concerned. As Sappho wrote, over two and half thousand years ago:

μνάσασθαί τινά φαιμι [καὶ ἕτερον] ἀμμέων... στᾶθι [κᾶντα] φίλος καὶ τὰν ἐπ' ὅσσοισ' ὀμπέτασον χάριν [1]

As for me, my journey of learning, of self-discovery, of making mistakes, of trying to acknowledge and correct my errors, of interior change via πάθει μάθος, does not yet seem to be ended.

January 30th 2012 ce

[1] Sappho, Fragments 147/138 [Lobel and Page].

My translation is:

Believe me, in the future someone  
Will remember us ...  
Because you love me  
Stand with me face to face  
And unveil the softness in your eyes ...

---

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International  
(CC BY-ND 4.0)

License and can be copied, distributed, and published, according to the terms of that license.

---

## Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

### Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos

≡ ≡ ≡

#### Précis

It is my contention that my personal 'numinous way of pathei-mathos', [1] or at least the foundations of that Way, which are personal empathy and pathei-mathos, could possibly be the basis for other individuals to develop their own numinous weltanschauung free from the influence of the manufactured impersonal causal abstractions that shaped the ancient world, some of which still influence the modern world, and the more recent impersonal causal abstractions which since the Second World War are prevalent and now authoritative in the modern world because supported by many if not most governments and Institutions in the Western world, and often now used by governments as the basis for criminal laws.

#### Defining Causal Abstractions

As described in the Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos, an abstraction is

"a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

All abstractions involve a causal perception, based as they are on the presumption of a linear cause-and-effect (and/or a dialectic) and on a posited or an assumed category or classification which differs in some way from some other assumed or posited categories/classifications, past, present or future. When applied to or used to describe/classify/distinguish/motivate living beings, abstractions involve a causal separation-of-otherness; and when worth/value/identity (and exclusion/inclusion) is or are assigned to such a causal separation-of-otherness then there is or there arises hubris.

Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction. For example, in respect of the abstraction of 'race' applied to human beings, and which categorization of human beings describes a median set of values said or assumed to exist 'now' or in some recent historical past." [1]

In philosophical terms, a causal abstraction is an ideation, an idea (ἰδέα/εἶδος), which is explained and/or defined by words and terms (denotata) and which invariably is used to form or describe a particular category of 'things'. [2] Thus a particular living tree is assigned to the category Oak, or a sub-category thereof, such as a Holm Oak, and which category is believed to be a means to 'know' and 'understand' that particular living being. Hence, that particular living tree is not considered to be an individual, separate, living entity with its own 'being' but is instead treated as one of a 'particular kind' and thus judged and treated according to what, at a particular time, is considered to be appropriate for the particular category it has been assigned to. This, in effect, is a stereotyping of a living, individual entity; and a stereotyping almost completely ignored in modern societies abrogating as those societies do certain ancestral, and world-wide, ancestral traditions where such a living entity was considered, even respected, as a living, individual entity; as for example in the ancient tradition in certain Britannic lands of venerating a particular Oak or a particular woodland.

In both ancient and modern times causal abstractions and the categories developed from them have been and are used to categorize human beings, as for example in regard to the supra-personal abstraction, the entity, termed 'the nation-State' where individual human beings and families are considered to be, or not to be, 'citizens' of that entity and often treated accordingly, with citizens having certain privileges and freedoms often denied to non-citizens.

More recently, causal abstractions and the categories developed from them have been deployed to describe individual human beings and their behaviour both personal and social. Thus, a human being categorized, and judged, by whomsoever for whatever reason, as 'depressive' is treated as the society of the time requires such a category to be treated, which is often by means of pharmaceutical medication and/or by a prescribed regime of therapy.

In another, perhaps more relevant example which I personally have some practical experience of, human beings are often categorized, and judged, by the political beliefs they publicly adhere to, or may be alleged to adhere to, at a particular time of their lives, especially if their political views do not align with, or contradict, the zeitgeist of the society of their time. Thus, in my own case, the judgement is "once a nazi always a nazi" and that such nazis should "never be forgiven" and treated according to whatever persecutorial and dehumanizing treatment the judgemental

ones deem such "nazis" deserve.

For such dehumanizing, or more precisely such hubriatic, impersonal, judgment and consequential treatment, is implicit in applying abstract, causal, abstractions to individual living beings, human and otherwise.

That this is not understood in the societies of our time, except by a few, is in my opinion somewhat indicative of how prevalent hubris still is among us.

Hence, despite our thousands of years old culture of pathei-mathos [3] we do not seem to have learned from what others tried to explain to us:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity. [4]

### **The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos**

The axioms are:

(i) That human beings possess a still mostly latent perceptive faculty, the faculty of empathy - ἐμπάθεια - which when used, or when developed and used, can provide us with a particular type of knowing, a particular type of knowledge, and especially a certain wordless knowledge concerning or awareness of the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings.

This type of knowing, this perception, is different from and supplementary to that acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science [5], and thus enables us to better understand Phainómenon, ourselves, and other living beings.

ii) That πάθει μάθος, a personal learning from adversity, from difficult, or harsh, or life threatening experiences, provides us or can provide us, like empathy, with a particular wordless knowledge concerning, or an awareness of, the φύσις (physis) of ourselves, of other human beings and of other living beings.

Thus, according to the numinous way of pathei-mathos it is personal empathy and pathei-mathos which enable us to circumvent causal abstractions because what is

"beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience [our pathei-mathos], beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals – is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." [6]

For a weltanschauung such as the numinous way of pathei-mathos betakes us or can betake us as individuals beyond the acceptance of a supra-personal authority, and thus beyond the demand by some supra-personal authority that we individuals accept or have to accepted such a supra-personal authority, and which authority, in the Western world was described in the Christian writings of Augustine (b.354 CE, d.430 CE), as for example in his *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* where in Book XIX, chapter xiii, he wrote of the necessity of a hierarchy in which God is the supreme authority, with peace between human beings and God requiring obedience to that authority; and with peace between human beings, and civil peace, also of necessity requiring obedience to an order in which each person has their allotted place, Ordo est parium dispariumque rerum sua cuique loca tribuens dispositio.

Modern nation-States have simply replaced God as the supreme authority with Prime Ministers, Presidents, and those who are described as elected "representatives of the people", or in case of some nation-States with some individual or individuals or some unelected representatives who or which have assumed authority by means such as a coup d'état or similar means, but all of whom expect the people they rule to obey whatever decisions or laws or diktats they make. Both types if necessary enforce their authority by means such as Courts of Law or through the use of civil or military organizations such as the Police and the armed forces, all of who or all of which accept and indeed are based upon a supra-personal chain-of-command with statutory laws made by some government (past and present) or imposed by some assumed authority regarded as necessary for what they deem to be the 'correct' functioning of society.

Furthermore, in practical terms a weltanschauung such as the numinous way of pathei-mathos

"means trying to cultivate within ourselves the virtues mentioned by Cicero – self-restraint, dignity, fairness, honesty – and implies we have no concern for or we seek to cultivate no concern for supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority – whether political, religious, or otherwise – and thus move away from, try to distance ourselves from, the consequences of such supra-personal hierarchies and supra-personal authority manifest as the consequences are and have been, throughout our [human] history, in war, prejudice, intolerance, unfairness, extremism, and persecution in the name of some ideology, some religion, or because someone has commanded us to persecute those that they and others have declared are 'our' enemies, and which war and persecutions are often, especially in modern times, accompanied by propaganda and lies." [7]

### **Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos**

Since the numinous way of pathei-mathos is based on personal empathy and personal pathei-mathos which develop an appreciation of the limitation, the infortunity, of words, and of the categories derived from them, and thus engenders in an individual a knowing of the limited nature of their understanding and of their fallibility, the numinous way of pathei-mathos is apolitical since politics is derived from and dependant on words, spoken and written, and on supra-personal often ideological categories as well as on supra-personal organizations or movements with a particular agenda or particular aims.

For an appreciation of the infortunity of words is a wordless-knowing, born of empathy and pathei-mathos, of the cycle of suffering; of how we humans continue to repeat the errors of the past caused as such errors often are by some suffering-causing causal abstractions championed by some supra-personal authority such as government or some President or Prime Minister or Caesar or Emperor or King or some tyrant or some religious potentate or preacher or political demagogue or political organization, urging us as individuals to go to war or partake in some invasion or crusade or armed conflict, or some campaign, or revolution, or whatever.

Thus it seems logical to suggest that if other individuals develop their own numinous weltanschauung it would be a personal and thus non-political one and, similar to the numinous way of pathei-mathos, involve a mystical living, a life-style choice, involving the individual and/or their partner or family if they have one; where the appellation 'mystical' suggests a personal intuitive insight about and a personal awareness of the nature of Reality, with Reality wordlessly known through their empathy and pathei-mathos.

There is also in the numinous way of pathei-mathos an appreciation of the fact that the nature of - the causality inherent in - denotata results in eris (ἔρις), and thus in a discord of opposites: for every denotatum has or develops an opposite and thus can cleave physis, as Heraclitus enigmatically expressed:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲν ἄξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόασι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται. [8]

Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done. [9]

εἰδέναι δὲ χρή τὸν πόλεμον ἐόντα ξυνόν, καὶ δίκην ἔριν, καὶ γινόμενα πάντα κατ' ἔριν καὶ χρεώμενα <χρεών> [10]

One should be aware that Polemos pervades, with discord δίκη, and that beings are naturally born by discord.

In addition,

"the meaning of the appellations inherent in causal abstraction can and does change over periods causal time through common usage and through the changes of interpretation (exegesis) wrought through political ideology, social change, and religious dogma and reforms. The interpretation of an appellation, a denotatum, in another language can also vary or distort the original meaning, a classic example being Hellenistic Greek words, occurring the Corpus Hermeticum, such as λόγος and νοῦς conventionally interpreted as 'word' and 'intellect/mind' neither of which interpretations are satisfactory.

What is important about all this is that empathy and pathei-mathos are directly personal and wordless perceiverations and experiences and therefore are not dependant on denotata, on any ἰδέα/εἶδος, and by the nature of empathy and pathei-mathos cannot be extrapolated beyond such a personal experiencing." [11]

[1] <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathe-mathos-v7.pdf>

[2] Philosophically, 'a thing' is an entity which exists independently of another 'thing', and which is a particular object of human perception. It is also or can be distinguishable from the word or the idea which attempts to describe it; that is, it is the actual 'being' behind or beyond such a causal apprehension or appellation.

[3] The culture of pathei-mathos is the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as may be (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as may have (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) may be manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms such as certain films and documentaries.

This thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern – such as *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath; and also works or art-forms inspired by such pathei-mathos, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of pathei-mathos.

[4] Hesiod, Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι [Works and Days], vv 213-218.

Notes on my translation:

a. δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι, as in Θεογονία (Theogony), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice'.

b. Μischief. The sense of ἄτησιν here is not of 'delusion' nor of 'calamities', per se, but rather of encountering that which or those whom (such as the goddess of mischief, Ἄτη) can bring mischief or misfortune into the 'fortunate life' of a 'fortunate mortal', and which encounters are, according to classical tradition, considered as having been instigated by the gods. Hence, of course, why Sophocles [Antigone, 1337-8] wrote ὡς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγὴ (mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate).

c. δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

d. νήπιος. Literal – 'young', 'uncultured' (i.e. un-schooled, un-educated in the ways of ancestral custom) – rather than metaphorical ('foolish', ignorant).

[5] The essentials which Aristotle enumerated are:

- i) Reality (existence) exists independently of us and our consciousness, and thus independent of our senses;
- (ii) our limited understanding of this independent 'external world' depends for the most part upon our senses, our faculties – that is, on what we can see, hear or touch; on what we can observe or come to know via our senses;
- (iii) logical argument, or reason, is perhaps the most important means to knowledge and understanding of and about this 'external world';
- (iv) the cosmos (existence) is, of itself, a reasoned order subject to rational laws.

In addition such essentials now include Isaac Newton's first Rules of Reasoning which is that

"We are to admit no more causes of natural things than such as are both true and sufficient to explain their appearances. To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain when less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity, and aspects not the pomp of superfluous causes."

Hence why it is often considered that there are five Aristotelian Essentials. Experimental science seeks to explain the natural world – the phenomenal world – by means of direct, personal observation of it, and by making deductions, and formulating hypothesis, based on such direct observation.

[6] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/dwm-some-metaphysical-questions-v5b.pdf>

[7] *Persecution And War*, 2018. [https://archive.org/download/persecution-and-war/Persecution\\_And\\_War.pdf](https://archive.org/download/persecution-and-war/Persecution_And_War.pdf)

[8] Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz.

[9] A short commentary on my translation is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

[10] Fragment B80.

[11] *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf>

# Denotata, Physis, And Pathei-Mathos

## Part One

### Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

#### A Particular Perceivration

A certain misunderstanding of David Myatt's weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos seems to have arisen based on Myatt's use of terms such as acausal, abstractions, and denotatum {1} which does not seem to take into account matters such as the following:

1. That Myatt's weltanschauung was developed and refined over a period of some years (c.2011-2017) and was based primarily on his outré experiences over some four decades, which refinement led him to write in 2022 that

"my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology." {2}

In effect, his weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos is a mystical perceivration and not an academic philosophy. {3}

2. That his classification of his insights using terminology such as ontology, epistemology, and ethics - as in for example his statement that "the ontology of beings [...] is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis" {4} - is only a temporary guide for readers since his focus is primarily on empathy and pathei-mathos as a means to knowing, both of which are personal, of the immediate moment, and which knowing, as he writes many times, cannot be extracted out from that personal experiencing to form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a denotata or some -ism or some -ology. {5}

That is, ontology itself is an abstraction, a denotatum, which empathy and pathei-mathos take us beyond. In this respect a simile might be Wittgenstein's 'ladder'.

3. That what applies to terminology such as ontology applies to his use of the acausal and his division of our physis, following his understanding of the Corpus Hermeticum, into masculous and muliebral. That they are also useful denotata to explain what is as it now is and has been but are ultimately discarded by the wordless knowing of empathy and pathei-mathos.

4. That his comparisons and examples derived from ancient Greek texts and philosophy - most of which he cites in Greek and provides his own translations - are of the insights of some others with which he finds some correlation with his own insights, eschewing as he does in his iconoclasm and resonance with Greco-Roman culture the modern practice in academia of citing works by philosophers of the past few centuries and more recent texts by academics.

#### The Mysticism Of Mr Myatt

The statement by Myatt, quoted above, that his weltanschauung is his

"attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology," {2}

is a succinct description of his mysticism; that is, of his personal perceivration of what is conventionally termed 'Reality', of Being and of beings. Which perceivration is of the numinous capable of apprehension, sans denotata, by means of empathy and pathei-mathos, obviating the need for theos (a supreme divinity) and for theoi (the divinities of various ancient religions, pagan and otherwise) and obviating the need for not only ideologies of whatever kind but for religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism which rely on the interpretation, the exegesis, of some text or texts. {6}

For Myatt, this apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals through the compassion, humility, and tolerance born of empathy and through the fairness, the reasonableness, of personal honour.

As noted in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, empathy:

"inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or



contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to *directly perceive*, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." [My emphasis] {7}

Furthermore, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos {8} and that there is what Myatt terms a 'local horizon' to empathy:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu {9} of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." {10}

"[a]s a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {11}

In regard to the numinous Myatt writes:

"In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of a priori. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." {12}

Which brings us to what seems to be a neglected aspect of his weltanschauung: the natural balance, harmony, ἁρμονία, for which he often uses the Taoist-derived term wu-wei which he defines as being "used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility." {13} That is, from the humility revealed by empathy.

His 2018 essay *Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture* elaborates on this notion of balance where he provides an example not only from Ancient Greece but from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum, and from Ficini's *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, written in Latin and published in 1489,

"Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονία (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona, 'How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned'.

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner." {14}

Which ancient notion of καλὸς κάγαθός he mentions in his two 2017 monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {15} and which comportment succinctly describes how his weltanschauung could be manifest in the world.

#### **Gentlemanly And Lady-like Behaviour**

As described earlier, Myatt's mystical apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals and this behaviour amounts to an individual comporting themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner; a comportment which has a long history in European culture from the idealized medieval chivalry of Morte Arthure to fictional Regency characters such as Mr Darcy, Elizabeth Bennet, Colonel Brandon, and Elinor Dashwood, to the 1940s Clive Wynne-Candy and Theo Kretschmar-Schuldorff.

In his 2014 essay *The Consolation Of A Viator*, Myatt indirectly references the character of Mr Darcy:

"For most of my life - and to paraphrase what someone once wrote - I have been a selfish being, prideful and conceited, and would still be so were it not for the suicide of a woman I loved." {16}

In the final paragraph of his autobiography *Myngath* he concludes that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all." {17}

Such personal sentiments ground, and in my view express the essence of, his weltanschauung and have apparently been somewhat neglected in discussions of Myatt's 'philosophy' of pathei-mathos. For it is not an academic philosophy divorced from the realities of human life but the life-experience of someone who, learning from both diverse experiences and decades of scholarly study, has distilled that learning into the understanding that in order to presence the numinous we do not need religions or any -ism or -ology or abstractions but have only to behave in a certain cultured way: with manners, fairness, honour, humility, and compassion.

Which attributes of personal character are, to use Myatt's term, descriptors not abstractions:

"A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy)." {13}

Hence why Myatt aptly describes his 'philosophy' as a "mystical individualistic numinous way," and as "the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way..." {18}

Morena Kapisiris  
June 2022

ooooooo

{1} It should be noted that in many of his writings Myatt often idiosyncratically uses *denotatum* as an Anglicized term for both singular and plural instances. However, I shall use denotata for the plural and denotatum for the singular.

{2} *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/05/dwm-questions-may-22.pdf>

{3} We have appropriated the term 'perceiversion' from Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum where he explains that he uses it to translate the Greek term νοῦς in place of the conventional translation 'mind', explaining his reasons in his article *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/concerning-ἀγαθός-and-νοῦς-in-the-corpus-hermeticum/> - and in his commentary on v.2 of the Poemandres tractate where he describes perceivance as:

"a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed the body." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{4} *Towards Understanding Physis*. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{5} See for example *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{6} In many of his writings Myatt has explained that the need for and practice of exegesis leads to suffering through reliance on a particular interpretation and through the conflict of competing interpretations which can lead to accusations of 'heresy'. See for example (i) the 2017 text *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/> and (ii) the 2019 text *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* which is included in his text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

In his 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* - included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition - he wrote that the local horizon of empathy

"and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis. It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{7} included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, op.cit.

{8} *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, third edition, 2021, p.5. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

In his *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, Myatt writes that the third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy* provides "a reasonably comprehensive overview" of his weltanschauung.

{9} As often, Myatt uses an alternative spelling: here *purveu* (from Middle English) instead of the now conventional 'purview'. See *On Idiosyncratic Capitalization and Spelling*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/on-idiosyncratic-capitalization-and-spelling/>

{10} Included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf>

{11} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/>

{12} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{13} *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit.

{14} The essay is included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit. Myatt translates the quotation from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum as "A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings," writing in his commentary:

"That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{15} (i) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf> (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{16} The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{17} *Myngath*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

{18} *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf>

## **The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt**

## Contents

Preface

I. A Modern Mystic: David Myatt And The Way of Pathei-Mathos

II. A Modern Pagan Philosophy

III. Honour In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

IV. An Overview of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos

Part One: Anti-Racism, Extremism, Honour, and Culture

Part Two: Humility, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos

V. Classical Paganism And A New Metaphysics

Appendix I. A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

Appendix II. Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

Appendix III. From Mythoi To Empathy: Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Appendix IV. Preface: One Perceiversion

Appendix V. Appreciating Classical Literature

Appendix VI. Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

Appendix VII. The Concept of Physis

---

## Preface

The essays included in this book - two written by JR Wright, and the others by R. Parker, and reproduced with their permission - not only provide an introduction to the philosophy of pathei-mathos as advanced by David Myatt between 2012 and 2015 but also place that philosophy into perspective, which is of a modern mystical philosophy with roots in Greco-Roman culture. Which somewhat distinguishes Myatt's philosophy from other contemporary philosophies and from the weltanschauungen of various individuals during the past three or more centuries. Myatt's philosophy is thus part of the Western philosophical tradition.

It is worth noting that in his more recent (2014-2015) essays Myatt has described his 'way of pathei-mathos' not as a philosophy but as a weltanschauung, writing in *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis* [1] that

"What I have previously described as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' and the 'way of pathei-mathos' is simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual."

Given Myatt's use of various terms from ancient Greek I have, for this third edition, included as appendices the Preface from his 2020 compilation *One Perceivoration* [2] and his 2019 text *Appreciating Classical Literature* [3] as well as his 2019 text *Physis And Being: An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, [4] and his *The Concept of Physis* which was included in the fifth, 2018, edition of his compilation *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. All of which additions further explain his mystical philosophy of pathei-mathos.

I have also updated references to his translations of tractates from the Corpus Hermeticism given the publication in 2017 of a book [5] containing his translations of and commentaries on the following eight tractates: I, III, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII.

I have updated some of the web-links in the text including in the appendices; also, in the footnotes the number beginning 978 - which generally follows the title of a printed book and its date of publication - refers to the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) as for example in the reference *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, 978-1976452369

Richard Stirling  
Shropshire  
Third Edition, 2021

[1] The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014.

[2] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/dwmyatt-one->

## I. A Modern Mystic

### David Myatt And The Way of Pathei-Mathos

#### Philosophy of a Modern Mystic

The 'way of pathei-mathos' (πάθει μάθος) is the name given, by David Myatt himself, to his own particular *Weltanschauung*, his own perspective about life, which he has expounded in numerous essays since 2011, and which perspective or personal philosophy he developed after he "had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of my earlier (2006-2011) numinous way." (1)

Myatt has conveniently collected most of the essays expounding his personal philosophy into four books: *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2013; *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2013; *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, published in 2014; and *Sarigthersa*, published in May 2015. These works amount to some 240 pages.

In one essay he makes it clear that the way, or the philosophy, of pathei-mathos is

"simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual, a fallibility proven by my decades of selfishness and by my decades of reprehensible extremism both political and religious. Furthermore, and according to my admittedly limited understanding and limited knowledge, this philosophy does not - in essence - express anything new. For I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I have only re-expressed what so many others, over millennia, have expressed as result of (i) their own pathei-mathos and/or (ii) their experiences/insights and/or (iii) their particular philosophical musings." (2)

As described in those four collections of essays, Myatt's particular perspective, or philosophy of life is, in my view, fundamentally a mystical one

because based on a personal intuitive insight about, a personal awareness of, the nature of Reality. A mystic accepts that there is, or there can arise by means such as contemplation, a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcends the temporal.

Myatt personal mystic insight is essentially two-fold: (a) that "we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life," (3); and (b) of "the primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum." (2)

According to Myatt, this awareness of our connexion to other life is that arising from empathy; more, precisely, from the faculty of empathy, which he explains is an awareness of, and a sympathy with, other living beings, and by means of which we can

"understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings - and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation implicit on opposites and dialectic), is a covering-up of Being." (4)

Less metaphysically, he writes that empathy

"inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to directly perceive, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." (5)

According to him, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos:

"Empathy is, as an intuitive understanding, what was, can be, and often is, learned or developed by πάθει μάθος. That is, from and by a direct, personal, learning from experience and suffering. An understanding manifest in our awareness of the numinous and thus in the distinction we have made, we make, or we are capable of making, between the sacred and the profane; the distinction made, for example in the past, between θεοί and δαιμόνων and mortals." (5)



One feature of Myatt's mysticism is his somewhat prolific use of ancient Greek terms and expressions; a use which he states is because

"the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." (5)(6)

### **Pathei-Mathos And Physis**

Since - as the name for his 'way' or philosophy implies - the concept of pathei-mathos is fundamental, as is the concept of physis, it is necessary to understand what Myatt means by both these concepts.

#### **1. Pathei-Mathos**

In several of his essays Myatt writes about this concept in some detail. For example:

"The Greek term πάθει μάθος derives from The Agamemnon of Aeschylus (written c. 458 BCE), and can be interpreted, or translated, as meaning 'learning from adversary', or 'wisdom arises from (personal) suffering'; or 'personal experience is the genesis of true learning'.

However, this expression should be understood in context, for what Aeschylus writes is that the Immortal, Zeus, guiding mortals to reason, has provided we mortals with a new law, which law replaces previous ones, and which new law - this new guidance laid down for mortals - is pathei-mathos.

Thus, for we human beings, pathei-mathos possesses a numinous, a living, authority - that is, the wisdom, the understanding, that arises from one's own personal experience, from formative experiences that involve some hardship, some grief, some personal suffering, is often or could be more valuable to us (more alive, more meaningful) than any doctrine, than any religious faith, than any words one might hear from someone else or read in some book.

In many ways, this Aeschylean view is an enlightened - a very

human – one, and is somewhat in contrast to the faith and revelation-centred view of religions such as Judaism, Islam, and Christianity." (7)

"A personal pathei-mathos [is] one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation- of-otherness), and by denotatum." (2)

This reliance on pathei-mathos makes his philosophy non-dogmatic, personal, and interior, especially given the connection Myatt makes between pathei-mathos and empathy; for the type of knowing both provide is a-causal in nature and is only manifest "in the immediacy-of-the-moment" and therefore "cannot be abstracted out from that 'living moment' via denotatum: by (words written or spoken), or be named or described or expressed (become fixed or 'known') by any dogma or any -ism or any -ology, be such -isms or -ologies conventionally understood as political, religious, ideological, or social." (2)

As Myatt explains, there is a 'local horizon' to both empathy and pathei-mathos:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purview of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." (8)

In further explaining what he means by the 'acausal (wordless) knowing' of empathy and pathei-mathos, Myatt introduces another fundamental aspect of his philosophy, the culture of pathei-mathos:

"What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or

who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." (8)

In addition he points out that such 'acausal knowing' is supplementary and complimentary to that 'causal knowing' which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science. (9)

## 2. Physis

In his essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (10) Myatt explains that he uses the term physis, φύσις, contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings.

According to Myatt - echoing as he does a concept found in several tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum (11) - the supposed necessity of denoting (or defining) ourselves, as an individual, in terms of either 'the masculous' or 'the muliebral' (12) is incorrect and distances us from understanding our human physis. That is, he suggests that every individual has (or can develop) a masculous and a muliebral aspect to their physis and that it is natural for us to develop both these aspects of our character, which development - and the balanced physis which results - would take us away from the dominating suffering causing patriarchal ethos of the past three thousand years, incline us toward empathy, compassion, and honour, and thus lessen the suffering which we inflict on other humans and on other life. (13) In respect of which development Myatt asks a rhetorical question:

"Will [it] take us another three thousand years, or more, or less, to live, world-wide, in societies where fairness, peace, and compassion, are the norm because the males of our species - perhaps by heeding Fairness and not obliging Hubris, perhaps by learning from our shared human culture of *pathei-mathos* - have personally, individually, balanced within themselves the masculous

with the muliebral and thus, because of sympatheia, follow the path of honour. Which balancing would naturally seem to require a certain conscious intent.

What, therefore, is our intent, as individual human beings, and can our human culture of pathei-mathos offer us some answers, or perchance some guidance? As an old epigram so well-expressed it:

θυνητοῖσιν ἀνωϊστῶν πολέων περ οὐδὲν ἀφραστότερον πέλεται  
νόου ἀνθρώποισι

"Of all the things that mortals fail to understand, the most incomprehensible is human intent."

Personally, I do believe that our human culture of pathei-mathos - rooted as it is in our ancient past, enriched as it has been over thousands of years by each new generation, and informing as it does of what is wise and what is unwise - can offer us both some guidance and some answers." (14)

### **A Complete Philosophy**

According to academic criteria, in order to qualify as a complete, and distinct, philosophy - in order to be a *Weltanschauung* - a particular philosophical viewpoint should possess the following: (i) a particular ontology, which describes and explains the concept of Being, and beings, and our relation to them; (ii) a particular theory of ethics, defining and explaining what is good, and what is bad; (iii) a particular theory of knowledge (an epistemology), of how truth and falsehood can be determined; and (iv) it should also be able to give or to suggest particular answers to questions such as "the meaning and purpose of our lives", and explain how the particular posited purpose may or could be attained.

Given that Myatt's 'way of pathei-mathos' provides the following answers, it does appear to meet the above criteria and thus could aptly be described as a distinct modern philosophy.

#### **i) Ontology**

"The ontology is of causal and acausal being, with (i) causal being as revealed by phainómenon, by the five Aristotelian essentials and thus by science with its observations and theories and principle of 'verifiability', and (ii) acausal being as revealed by συμπάθεια - by the acausal knowing (of living beings) derived from faculty of empathy - and thus of the distinction between the 'time' (the change) of living-beings and the 'time' described via the measurement of the observed or the assumed/posited/predicted movement of things." (2)

#### **ii) Epistemology**

"The primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum.

Adding the 'acausal knowing' revealed by the (muliebral) faculty of empathy to the conventional, and causal (and somewhat masculous), knowing of science and logical philosophical speculation, with the proviso that what such 'acausal knowing' reveals is (i) of φύσις, the relation between beings, and between beings and Being, and thus of 'the separation-of-otherness', and (ii) the personal and numinous nature of such knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment." (2)

### iii) Ethics

"Of personal honour - which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." (2)

### iv) Meaning

"It is wise to avoid causing or contributing to suffering not because such avoidance is a path toward nirvana (or some other posited thing), and not because we might be rewarded by God, by the gods, or by some divinity, but rather because it manifests the reality, the truth - the meaning - of our being." (15)

"Of understanding ourselves in that supra-personal, and cosmic, perspective that empathy, honour, and pathei mathos - and thus an awareness of the numinous and of the acausal - incline us toward, and which understanding is: (i) of ourselves as a finite, fragile, causal, viatorial, microcosmic, affective effluvium of Life (ψυχή) and thus connected to all other living beings, human, terran, and non-terran, and (ii) of there being no supra-personal goal to strive

toward because all supra personal goals are and have been just posited - assumed, abstracted - goals derived from the illusion of ipseity, and/or from some illusive abstraction, and/or from that misapprehension of our φύσις that arises from a lack of empathy, honour, and pathei-mathos.

For a living in the moment, in a balanced - an empathic, honourable - way, presences our φύσις as conscious beings capable of discovering and understanding and living in accord with our connexion to other life." (2)

### **A Spiritual Way**

Myatt's answers to the questions of "the meaning and purpose of our lives" and of "how the posited purpose might be attained" reveal - as he himself admits in many of his essays - that his philosophy of pathei-mathos embodies a cultured pagan ethos similar to the paganism manifest in many of the writings of Cicero. In his essay on *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, Myatt approvingly quotes Cicero (in Latin) and paraphrases the explanation of meaning which Cicero gives in the second book of *De Natura Deorum*:

"The classical weltanschauung was a paganus one: an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself.

Furthermore, this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals." (16)

But Myatt's philosophy is certainly not a modern restatement of a type of paganism that existed in ancient Greece and Rome. For his philosophy is concerned with the individual and especially with their interior life; with their 'acausal' connection - through what Myatt terms the cultivation of the virtues of empathy, compassion, humility, and personal honour - to Being and thence to other life, sentient and otherwise. This marks it as a spiritual way, but one devoid of 'abstractions' and dogma. As Myatt writes:

"To formulate some standard or rule or some test to try to evaluate alternatives and make choices in such matters is to make presumptions about what constitutes progress; about what constitutes a 'higher' level - or a more advanced stage - and what constitutes a 'lower' level or stage. That is, to not only make a moral judgement connected to what is considered to be 'good' and

'evil' - right and wrong, correct and incorrect - but also to apply that judgement to others and to 'things'. To judge them, and/or the actions of others, by whether they are on a par with, or are moving toward or away from, that 'right' and that 'wrong'.

This is, in my view, a veering toward hubris, away from the natural balance, and thus away from that acknowledgement of our fallibility, of our uncertainty of knowing, that is the personal virtue of humility. For the essence of the culture of pathei-mathos, and the genesis, the ethos, of all religious revelations and spiritual ways before or until they become dogmatical, seems to be that we can only, without hubris, without prejudice, judge and reform ourselves.

For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris." (17)

According to Myatt, empathy and pathei-mathos incline us - or can incline us - toward humility (18), for

"personal humility is the natural balance living within us; that is, we being or becoming or returning to the balance that does not give rise to ἔρις. Or, expressed simply, humility disposes us toward gentleness, toward kindness, toward love, toward peace; toward the virtues that are balance, that express our humanity." (19)

In other words, humility expresses the *raison d'être* of Myatt's philosophy, born as this philosophy is from his own pathei-mathos.

### **A Modern Gnostic**

A Gnostic is someone who seeks gnosis: wisdom and knowledge; someone involved in a life-long search, a quest, for understanding, and who more often than not views the world, or more especially ordinary routine life, as often mundane and often as a hindrance. In my view, this is a rather apt description of Myatt during his idealist and 'extremist' decades; decades (1968-2009) which are reasonably now well-known and documented in various academic sources.

It is thus no surprise that Myatt has been described as an "extremely violent, intelligent, dark, and complex individual," (20) as "a British iconoclast who has lived a somewhat itinerant life and has undertaken an equally desultory intellectual quest," (21); as "arguably England's principal proponent of contemporary neo-Nazi ideology and theoretician of revolution," (22); as having undertaken various "Faustian quests", (23); as "a fierce Jihadist," (24) and as having undertaken a "Siddhartha-like search for truth" and "a global odyssey which took him on extended stays in the Middle East and East Asia, accompanied by studies of religions ranging from Christianity to Islam in the

Western tradition and Taoism and Buddhism in the Eastern path." (25)

Thus, his

"philosophy of πάθει μάθος [...] is not a conventional, an academic, one where a person intellectually posits or constructs a coherent theory - involving ontology, epistemology, ethics, and so on - often as a result of an extensive dispassionate study, review, or a criticism of the philosophies or views, past and present, advanced by other individuals involved in the pursuit of philosophy as an academic discipline or otherwise. Instead, the philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture." (26)

As Myatt has explained in various writings - such as in parts two and three of his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*, published in 2013, (27) - it was his own painful 'learning from practical experience' which compelled him to develop his philosophy of pathei-mathos:

"What I painfully, slowly, came to understand, via pathei-mathos, was the importance - the human necessity, the virtue - of love, and how love expresses or can express the numinous in the most sublime, the most human, way. Of how extremism (of whatever political or religious or ideological kind) places some abstraction, some ideation, some notion of duty to some ideation, before a personal love, before a knowing and an appreciation of the numinous. Thus does extremism - usurping such humanizing personal love - replace human love with an extreme, an unbalanced, an intemperate, passion for something abstract: some ideation, some ideal, some dogma, some 'victory', some-thing always supra-personal and always destructive of personal happiness, personal dreams, personal hopes; and always manifesting an impersonal harshness: the harshness of hatred, intolerance, certitude-of-knowing, unfairness, violence, prejudice."

My considered opinion is that it is this redemptive 'Faustian' learning from practical (mostly extreme, and both 'dark' and 'light') experiences which distinguishes Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos from the many academic and/or armchair philosophies proposed by others in the last two hundred years. For Myatt has "been there, done that" and - so it seems - learned valuable lessons as a result, making his philosophy much more than either intellectual speculation by some academic or something devised by some pseudo-intellectual dilettante.



## Notes

### Abbreviations

*NWPM: The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos (Fifth edition, 2017). 978-1484096642*

*REPM: Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos (2013). 978-1484097984*

*EFG: One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings (2014). 978-1502396105*

*SARIG: Sarigthersa (2015). 978-1512137149*

1) Myatt, David (2012). *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*. The essay is included as an appendix in Myatt's autobiography, *Myngath*, published in 2013. ( 978-1484110744)

2) *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. EFG.

It should be noted that all four printed books detailing Myatt's philosophy are idiosyncratic in terms of size, being 8.5 x 11 inches which is larger than the standard paperback size of 6 x 9 inches.

It should also be noted that Myatt idiosyncratically uses the term "denotatum" - from the Latin *denotare* - not only as meaning 'to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer to that which is so named or so denoted,' but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*." *Physis And Being - An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos*, included here as Appendix VI

3) *The Nature and Knowledge of Empathy*. NWPM.

4) *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic*. NWPM.

5) *The Way of Pathei-Mathos: A Philosophical Compendiary*. NWPM.

6) Myatt's frequent and somewhat idiosyncratic use of the term Hellenic requires some explanation. As the context often suggests, he generally means the culture of ancient Greece in general, from the time of Homer to

the time of Euclid, Aristotle, and beyond. He is not therefore referring to what has academically come to be termed the later Hellenistic (Greco-Roman) period distinguished as that period is, somewhat artificially, from the earlier culture of classical Greece.

That said, he does rather confusingly and on occasion make such a distinction - as in his essay *Towards Understanding Physis* [SARIG], and in his translation of and commentary on the Pymander tractate - between classical Greece and Hellenistic (Greco-Roman) Greece.

7) *Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way*. NWPM.

8) *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. SARIG.

Myatt technically defines 'the culture of pathei-mathos' as

"the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries." *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*. EFG.

9) *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. NWPM.

10) Included in *Sarigthersa*.

11) Myatt's translation of, and extensive commentary on, the Pymander tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum was included in his 2017 book *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 978-1976452369, and which book also includes translations of and commentaries on tractates II, IV, VI, VIII, XI, XII, XIII.

12) In his *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos* (included in NWPM) Myatt defines masculous and muliebral as follows:

Masculous is a term, a descriptor, used to refer to certain traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with men, such as competitiveness, aggression, a certain harshness, the desire to organize/control, and a desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war/violence/competition over and above personal love and culture. Extremist ideologies manifest an unbalanced, an excessive, masculous nature.

The term muliebral derives from the classical Latin word muliebris, and in the context the philosophy of Pathei-Mathos refers to those positive traits, abilities, and qualities that are conventionally and historically associated with women, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion, and a desire to love and be loved over and

above a desire for conflict/adventure/war.

13) *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*. SARIG. See also his answer to the question in his *Some Questions For DWM*, included in EFG, which question begins: "In your book 'Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination' you wrote that extremists have or they develop an inflexible masculine character, often excessively so; and a character which expresses the masculine nature, the masculine ethos, of extremism..."

14) *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*. SARIG.

15) *The Consolation Of A Viator*. EFG.

16) EFG.

17) *Good, Evil, and The Criteria of Progress*. REPM.

18) *Morality, Virtues, and Way of Life*. NWPM.

19) *Numinous Expiation*. REPM.

20) Raine, Susan. *The Devil's Party* (Book review). *Religion*, Volume 44, Issue 3, July 2014, pp. 529-533.

21) Jon B. Perdue: *The War of All the People: The Nexus of Latin American Radicalism and Middle Eastern Terrorism*. Potomac Books, 2012. p.70-71.  
9781597977043

22) Michael, George. *The New Media and the Rise of Exhortatory Terrorism*. *Strategic Studies Quarterly* (USAF), Volume 7 Issue 1, Spring 2013.

23) Michael, George. (2006) *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right*. University Press of Kansas, p. 142.

24) Author Martin Amis several times described Myatt as "a fierce Jihadist". For instance, in his book *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157.

According to Professor Wistrich, when a Muslim Myatt was a staunch advocate of "Jihad, suicide missions and killing Jews..." and also "an ardent defender of bin Laden." Wistrich, Robert S, *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010.  
978-1-4000-6097-9.

See also the report of a UNESCO conference in 2003 [Simon Wiesenthal Center: *Response*, Summer 2003, Vol 24, #2] where it was stated that "David Myatt, the leading hardline Nazi intellectual in Britain since the 1960s [...] has converted to Islam, praises bin Laden and al Qaeda, calls the 9/11 attacks 'acts of heroism,' and urges the killing of Jews. Myatt, under the

name Abdul Aziz Ibn Myatt supports suicide missions and urges young Muslims to take up Jihad."

25) Kaplan, Jeffrey (2000). *Encyclopedia of white power: a sourcebook on the radical racist right*. Rowman & Littlefield, p. 216ff; p.512f

26) *A Philosophical Compendiary*. NWPM.

27) 978-1484854266.

---

## **II. A Modern Pagan Philosophy**

It is my contention that the philosophy - the weltanschauung - advanced by David Myatt between 2012 and 2015 {1}, and named by him as 'the philosophy of pathei-mathos', is not only a modern expression of the Western mystical tradition {2} but also a pagan philosophy.

In respect of mysticism, a mystic is a person (i) who by means such as contemplation desires a selfless awareness of God or of Reality, 'the cosmic order', or (ii) who accepts that there is a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal. This apprehension certainly applies to Myatt's philosophy, based as it is on what Myatt terms 'the acausal knowing' resulting from empathy and pathei-mathos.

In respect of paganism, it is generally defined - from the classical Latin *paganus*, and ignoring the modern re-interpretation of the word by self-described contemporary pagans - as meaning "of or belonging to a rural community" in contrast to belonging to an urban or a more organized community (such as a religious Church), from whence derived the later (c. 1440 CE, post Morte Arthure) description of a pagan as a non-Christian, a 'heathen' (Old English *hæðen*), and thus as describing a person who holds a religious belief which is neither Christian, Jewish, nor Muslim.

Myatt however provides his own, rather more philosophical, definition, relating as his definition does to the paganism of the Western, Greco-Roman, tradition. Thus Myatt - paraphrasing a passage from Cicero's *De Natura Deorum* and quoting the original Latin - defines paganism as

"an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals - albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity - have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced

(perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself: Neque enim est quicquam aliud praeter mundum quoui nihil absit quodque undique aptum atque perfectum expletumque sit omnibus suis numeris et partibus [...] ipse autem homo ortus est ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum - nullo modo perfectus, sed est quaedam particula perfecti." {3}

Which apprehension of the κόσμος certainly describes Myatt's philosophy where

"there is a perceiviation of our φύσις; of us as - and not separate from - the Cosmos: a knowledge of ourselves as the Cosmos presenced (embodied, incarnated) in a particular time and place and in a particular way. Of how we affect or can affect other effluvia, other livings beings, in either a harmful or a non-harming manner. An apprehension, that is, of the genesis of suffering and of how we, as human beings possessed of the faculties of reason, of honour, and of empathy, have the ability to cease to harm other living beings. Furthermore, and in respect of the genesis of suffering, this particular perceiviation provides an important insight about ourselves, as conscious beings; which insight is of the division we mistakenly but understandably make, and have made, consciously or unconsciously, between our own being - our ipseity - and that of other living beings, whereas such a distinction is only an illusion - appearance, hubris, a manufactured abstraction - and the genesis of such suffering as we have inflicted for millennia, and continue to inflict, on other life, human and otherwise." {4}

Furthermore, there is an emphasis in Myatt's philosophy on balancing within ourselves 'the masculous' with 'the muliebral' in order that we may not only perceive the unity beyond what Myatt terms 'the illusion of ipseity' {5} but also become as harmonious as that unity; a unity achievable - according to Myatt - be developing and using our faculty of empathy and by cultivating the virtue of personal honour, which virtue manifests, 'presences', that self-restraint - that moderation - described by the Greek term εὐταξία {4}.

### **Masculous And Muliebral**

One of the unique features of Myatt's philosophy, and thus of his paganism, is the distinction he makes between the masculous and the muliebral aspects of our human nature. In *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis* he writes of the necessity of the muliebral virtues

"which, combined, manifest an enantiodromiacal change in our human physis and which change, which balancing of the masculous with the muliebral, consequently could evolve us beyond the patriarchal ethos, and the masculous societies, which have been such a feature of human life on this planet for the past three thousand years, genesis as that ethos and those societies have been of so much grieving." {6}

For according to Myatt

"it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculous talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculous talking-mammals have - thousand year following thousand year - caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise." {7}

In effect Myatt is suggesting that the solution to the problem of suffering - the answer to the question of 'good and evil' - lies not in politics, nor in religion, nor in supra-personal social change, and certainly not in revolutions, invasions, and wars, but in ourselves by us as individuals valuing and cultivating the muliebral virtues. What this means in practical terms - although Myatt himself does not directly spell it out but rather implies it - is men appreciating women, treating them honourably and as equals, and cultivating in their own lives muliebral virtues such as εὐταξία, empathy, and compassion.

This emphasis on the muliebral, and thus on internal balance, distinguishes Myatt's philosophy from other philosophies, ancient and modern, most of which philosophies are imbued with a decidedly masculous ethos; and none of which emphasize personal virtues such as honour and empathy, and the ethics derived therefrom; and none of which have an ontology of causal and acausal being.

Which Myattian ontology is crucial to understanding such an emphasis on the muliebral and the enantiodromiacal change in our physis resulting from us perceiving and understanding (via empathy and pathei-mathos) the unity beyond the unnecessary division between the masculous and the muliebral and the other divisions we make based on abstractions, denotatum, and ipseity.

As Myatt explains,

"empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presented in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." {8}

## A Modern Paganism

Contrary to contemporary neo-pagan revivalism - with its made-up beliefs, practices, romanticism, rituals, and lack of philosophical rigour - Myatt has not only produced a modern pagan philosophy with a unique epistemology, a unique ontology, and a unique theory of ethics {9} but also continued and creatively added to the classical - that is, Western, pre-Christian - pagan and mystical traditions.

For Myatt has asked

(i) if Being - whether denoted by terms such as acausal, born-less, θεός The One, The Divine, God, The Eternal, Μονάς - can be apprehended (or defined) by some-things which are causal (denoted by terms such as spatial, temporal, renewance), and (ii) whether this 'acausal Being' is the origin or the genesis or 'the artisan' or the creator of both causal being (including 'time', and 'change') and of causal living beings such as ourselves.

That is, (i) has causal spatially-existing being 'emerged from' - or been created by - acausal Being, and (ii) are causal beings - such as ourselves - an aspect or emanation of acausal Being? {8}

His answer:

"formulating such a question in such terms - causal/acausal; whole/parts; eternal/temporal; ipseity/unity; emergent from/genesis of - is a mis-apprehension of what-is because such denoting is 'us as observer' (i) positing, as Plato did, such things as a theory regarding 'the ideal', and/or (ii) constructing a form or abstraction (ἰδέα) which we then presume to project onto what is assumed to be 'external' to us, both of which present us with only an illusion of understanding and meaning because implicit in such theories and in all such constructed forms are (i) an opposite (an 'other') and (ii) the potentiality for discord (dialectical or otherwise) between such opposites and/or because of a pursuit of what is regarded as 'the ideal' of some-thing." {8}

Which led Myatt to suggest that Being, and our own physis, can be discovered - known and understood - by empathy and pathei-mathos which both by-pass abstractions, denotatum, and opposites, and enable us to appreciate the numinosity of Being.

What therefore is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? According to Myatt

"it is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this

knowing is that - unlike a form or an abstraction - it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." {8}

Which is a rather succinct description of the essence, the ethos, of the Western pagan and mystic traditions where each individual acquires a personal, non-dogmatic, apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal.

R. Parker  
2016

{1} David Myatt's philosophy is outlined in four collections of essays published between 2013 and 2015. The works are as follows:

- i) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484096642.
- ii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484097984.
- iii) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. -13: 978-1502396105.
- iv) *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015. -13: 978-1512137149.

{2} The words 'mystical' and 'mysticism' are derived from the term mystic, the etymology and English usage of which are:

i) Etymology:

- ° Classical Latin *mysticus*, relating to sacred mysteries, mysterious;
- ° Post-classical Latin, in addition to the above: symbolic, allegorical;
- ° Ancient Greek *μυστικός*, relating to sacred mysteries;
- ° Hellenistic Greek *μυστικός*, initiate; plural, *μυστικοί*; also: symbolic, allegorical, spiritual, esoteric, mysterious, occult;
- ° Byzantine Greek (5th century CE ) *μυστικόν*, mystical doctrine.

ii) English usage:

- ° noun: symbolic, allegorical (c. 1350);
- ° noun: an exponent or advocate of mystical theology;
- ° noun: a person who by means such as contemplation desires a selfless awareness of God or 'the cosmic order' (*mundus*), or who accepts that there is a spiritual apprehension of certain truths which transcend the temporal;
- ° adjective: esoteric, mysterious, [equivalent in usage to 'mystical']



° adjective: of or relating to esoteric rites [equivalent in usage to 'mystical']

{3} *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*. The essay is included in Myatt's *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{4} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. qv. Myatt's *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{5} Myatt discusses 'the illusion of ipseity' in several of his essays, including *Towards Understanding The Acausal* (qv. *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*) and *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions* (qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*).

{6} qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*.

{7} *Some Questions For DWM* (2014). Included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{8} *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. qv. *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*.

{9} His ontology, ethics, and epistemology are described by Myatt in *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis* (qv. *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*).

---

### III. Honour In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

Along with the faculty of empathy and pathei-mathos, central to David Myatt's philosophy {1} is what he terms the virtue of honour, writing that

"personal honour - which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - [is] (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment." {2}

Thus, like both empathy and pathei-mathos, Myatt conceives of honour not as an abstraction {3} - not in any idealistic way - but as "an expression of our own φύσις; and a person either has this 'faculty of honour' or they do not."

{4} Myatt goes on to suggest that such a faculty - like the faculty of empathy - can be consciously developed; that

"through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {2}{5}

Myatt is at pains to point out, several times, not only that honour, empathy, and pathei-mathos, are related:

"What, therefore, is the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal? It is the knowing manifest in our human culture of pathei-mathos. The knowing communicated to us, for example, by art, music, literature, and manifest in the lives of those who presenced, in their living, compassion, love, and honour. Germane to this knowing is that – unlike a form [ἰδέα, εἶδος] or an abstraction – it is always personal (limited in its applicability) and can only be embodied in and presenced by some-thing or by some-one which or who lives. That is, it cannot be abstracted out of the living, the personal, moment of its presencing by someone or abstracted out from its living apprehension by others in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot become 'an ideal' or form the foundation for some dogma or ideology or supra-personal faith." {6}

but also that what is revealed, known, and understood, and sometimes acted upon, is always personal; with empathy, pathei-mathos, and honour emphasizing

"the importance of living in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment", sans the pursuit of some ideal or of some assumed perfection; with what is 'good' being not some abstraction denoted by some faith, dogma, ideal, ideology, or by some collocation of words, but rather is a function of, a wordless revealing by, our personal, our individual, empathic horizon, by our pathei-mathos, and by the collected human pathei-mathos of millennia manifest as that is in the culture of pathei-mathos. Which revealing is that what-lives is more important than any ideal, than any abstraction or form, with 'the good' simply being that which does not cause suffering to, or which can alleviate the suffering of, what-lives, human and otherwise.

Thus the 'meaning' of our physis, of our living, so revealed, is just that of a certain way of living; a non-defined, non-definable, very personal way of living, only relevant to us as an individual where we – appreciating our human culture of pathei-mathos, and thus appreciative of art, music, literature, and other emanations of the numinous – incline toward not causing suffering and incline (by means of empathy, compassion, and honour) toward alleviating such suffering as we may personally encounter in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment". {6}

## Honour In Practice

What all this amounts to, in respect of honour, is that there can be no supra-personal 'code of honour' or 'code/theory of ethics' – written or oral – which an individual seeks to uphold and live by, since honour in Myatt's philosophy is not an ideal to be followed or aspired to. A person thus does what is honourable – in the "immediacy of the personal, living, moment" – because it is their nature, a wordless part of their way of life, to do so; to behave in such a manner that there is, in such a moment, a natural balancing of Life itself, since the personal virtue of honour is

"a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις [hubris], in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη [balance, harmony]." {7}

That is, the judgement regarding when and how to act is and can only be an individual one, in and of the moment. In addition, Myatt emphasizes several times that compassion – and the desire not to cause suffering – should be balanced, and are balanced, by and because of honour:

"This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν [discernment] and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets." {7}

Honour therefore, in my view, humanizes Myatt's mystical philosophy,

making it an individual and quite practical and a decidedly pagan way of life {8} where the development of and the use of individual judgement – in respect of others and situations – is paramount. A development – a cultivation of discernment – by means of empathy, personal pathei-mathos, and learning from our human culture of pathei-mathos.

That Myatt has framed his philosophy in terms of Greco-Roman culture – so evident for instance in his use of Greek terms and his copious quotations from Greek and Roman authors – makes it a distinct modern philosophy which has not only "continued and creatively added to the classical – that is, Western, pre-Christian – pagan and mystical traditions" {9}, but has also, through the centrality of personal honour, of the muliebral virtues {10}, and of humility {11}, restored the Western ethic of gallantry.

R. Parker  
2016

{1} The philosophy of pathei-mathos is described by David Myatt in the following four collections of essays:

- i) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484096642.
- ii) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. -13: 978-1484097984.
- iii) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. -13: 978-1502396105.
- iv) *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015. -13: 978-1512137149.

{2} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos – A Précis*. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{3} Myatt, in his *Towards Understanding Physis* (included in *Sarigthersa*), defines an abstraction as "a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median."

In later essays, such as *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, he explains that denotatum – which he uses in accord with its general meaning, which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted" – and abstractions both conceal physis and thus prevent us from understanding our own being, our nature as mortals.

{4} *Some Questions For DWM* (2014). Included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*.

{5} Myatt, in his essay *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, defines 'the culture of pathei-mathos' as "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or

poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

Of δίκη, Myatt, in his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, writes:

"Depending on context, δίκη could be the judgement of an individual (or Judgement personified), or the natural and the necessary balance, or the correct/customary/ancestral way, or what is expected due to custom, or what is considered correct and natural, and so on. A personified Judgement – the Δίκη of Hesiod – is the goddess of the natural balance, evident in the ancestral customs, the ways, the way of life, the ethos, of a community, whose judgement, δίκη, is "in accord with", has the nature or the character of, what tends to restore such balance after some deed or deeds by an individual or individuals have upset or disrupted that balance. This sense of δίκη as one's ancestral customs is evident, for example, in Homer (*Odyssey*, III, 244)."

However, in several of his essays – such as *Some Conjectures Concerning Our Nexible Physis*, included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*, Myatt also uses δίκη to mean 'fairness', quoting Hesiod and providing his own translation and which translation mentions both honour and a learning from adversity:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μὴδ' ὕβριν ὀφελλε:  
ὑβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῷ βροτῷ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύναται, βαρύνθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to [the goddess] Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

In his footnotes to his translation Myatt explains:

δίκη. The goddess of Fairness/Justice/Judgement, and – importantly – of Tradition (Ancestral Custom). In [*Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι*], as in *Θεογονία* (*Theogony*), Hesiod is recounting and explaining part of that tradition, one important aspect of which tradition is understanding the relation between the gods and mortals. Given both the antiquity of the text and the context, 'Fairness' – as the name of the goddess – is, in my view, more appropriate than the now common appellation 'Justice', considering the modern (oft times impersonal) connotations of the word 'justice' [...]

δίκαιος. Honour expresses the sense that is meant: of being fair; capable of doing the decent thing; of dutifully observing ancestral customs. A reasonable alternative for 'honour' would thus be 'decency', both preferable to words such as 'just' and 'justice' which are not only too impersonal but have too many inappropriate modern connotations.

{6} *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*. 2015. Note that here, as elsewhere in other quotations from Myatt's writings, I have provided – in square brackets [ ] – a translation of some of the Greek terms Myatt

uses.

{7} *The Numinous Balance of Honour*. Included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

{8} I have outlined the pagan nature of Myatt's philosophy in *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*.

{9} R. Parker. *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*. e-text, 2016.

{10} See the *Masculous And Muliebral* section of my *A Modern Pagan Philosophy*.

{11} Humility is one of the personal virtues of Myatt's philosophy. Myatt in his 2012 essay *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility* explains that he uses the term

"in a spiritual context to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὕβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace."

---

#### **IV. An Overview of David Myatt's Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos**

##### **Part One**

##### **Anti-Racism, Extremism, Honour, and Culture**

It is now generally acknowledged, by those who have studiously studied his post-2011 writings, that David Myatt - once renowned as an ideologue {1} and as a 'theoretician of terror' {2} - has rejected the extremism that dominated his life for some forty years, thirty of which years were spent as a neo-nazi activist and ten as a "fierce Jihadist" {3} and apologist for Al-Qaeda {4}.

According to his own account {5} this rejection was a consequence of pathei mathos - primarily, the suicide of his partner in 2006 - and which learning from grief resulted in him developing what he termed a philosophy of pathei-

mathos centred around personal virtues such as humility, compassion, empathy and personal honour {6}{7}. In addition he has written several interesting, if rather neglected, essays in which he discourses about culture and - politically relevant today - about topics such as extremism. In these discourses, which apply his philosophy to the topics discussed, he is at pains to point out that he presents only his "personal, fallible, opinion about such matters" and that these opinions derive from his decades of "experience of extremists and my decade of study and personal experience of, and involvement with, Islam." {8}

### **Culture, Civilization, and Politics**

Given Myatt's predilection during his extremist decades, and especially as a neo-nazi ideologue, for pontificating about both 'culture' and 'civilization', his mature view of such things, resulting from his recent seven or so years of interior reflection following his learning from grief {9}, are of especial interest.

For he writes that:

"The very usage of the term civilization, for instance, implies a bias; a qualitative often pejorative, prejudiced, assessment and thence a division between something judged 'better than' - or 'superior to' or 'more advanced than' - something else, so that 'to civilize' denotes "the action or process of being made civilized" by something or someone believed or considered to be more distinguished, or better than, or superior to, or more advanced.

In common with some other writers, my view is that a clear distinction should be made between the terms culture, society, and civilization, for the terms culture and society - when, for example, applied to describe and distinguish between the customs and way of life of a group or people, and the codes of behaviour and the administrative organization and governance of those residing in a particular geographical area - are quantitative and descriptive rather than qualitative and judgemental. It is therefore in my view inappropriate to write and talk about a European or a Western 'civilization' [...]

[T]he essence, the nature, of all cultures is the same: to refine, and develop, the individual; to provide a moral guidance; to cultivate such skills as that of reasoning and learning and civility; to be a repository of the recorded/aural pathei-mathos, experiences, and empathic understanding of others (such as our ancestors) over decades, centuries, millennia, as manifest for example in literature, music, memoirs, poetry, history, Art, and often in the past in myths and legends and religious allegories. A recorded/aural pathei-mathos and empathic understanding - a human learning - which teach the same lessons, whatever the culture, whatever the people, whatever the time and whatever the place. The lesson of the

importance of a loyal love between two people; the lesson of the importance of virtues such as εὐταξία and honour; the lesson of the need to avoid committing the error of hubris. The lesson of hope, redemption, and change. And the lesson concerning our own nature [...]

Ultimately, the assumed or the perceived, the outer, differences do not matter, since what matters for us as human beings capable of reason and civility is our shared humanity and the wisdom that all cultures guide us toward: which wisdom is that it is what is moral - it is what keeps us as mortals balanced, aware of and respective of the numinous - that should guide us, determine our choices and be the basis of our deeds, for our interaction with other human beings, with society, and with the life with which we share this planet.

As outlined in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, my personal view is that the criteria of assessment and judgement are the individual ones of empathy, reason, and the presumption of innocence; which means that abstractions, ideations, theories, and categories, of whatever kind - and whether deemed to be political, religious, or social - are considered unimportant. That what matters, what is moral, is a very personal knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment so that what is beyond the purview of our empathy, of our personal knowing, knowledge, and experience, is something we rationally accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. Hence, and for example, individuals and people we do not know, of whatever faith, of whatever perceived ethnicity, sexual orientation, or perceived or assumed or proclaimed culture - whom we have no personal experience of and have had no interaction with over a period of causal time - are unjudged by us and thus given the benefit of the doubt; that is, regarded as innocent, assumed to be good, unless or until direct personal experience, and individual and empathic knowing of them, as individuals, proves otherwise [...]

What matters are our own moral character, our interior life, our appreciation of the numinous, and the individual human beings we interact with on the personal level; so that our horizon is to refine ourselves into cultured beings who are civil, reasoned, empathic, non-judgemental, unbiased, and who will, in the words of one guide to what is moral, Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ." {8}

Myatt's emphasis is thus on the individual; on their interior life, and their personal interaction with others in what he terms, in his philosophy of pathei-mathos, the immediacy of the personal moment:

"Since the range of our faculty of empathy is limited to the immediacy-of-the-moment and to personal interactions, and since the learning wrought by pathei-mathos and pathei-mathos itself is



and are direct and personal, then the knowledge, the understanding, that empathy and *pathei-mathos* reveal and provide is of the empathic scale of things and of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding. That is, what is so revealed is not some grand or grandiose theory or praxis or philosophy which is considered applicable to others, or which it is believed can or should be developed to be applicable to others or developed to offer guidance beyond the individual in political and/or social and/or religious and/or ideological terms; but rather a very personal, individual, spiritual and thus interior, way. A way of tolerance and humility, where there is an acceptance of the unwisdom, the hubris, the unbalance, of arrogantly, pejoratively, making assumptions about who and what are beyond the range of our empathy and outside of our personal experience." {10}

There is, therefore, a rejection of involvement with politics:

"Given that the concern of the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is the individual and their interior, their spiritual, life, and given that (due to the nature of empathy and *pathei-mathos*) there is respect for individual judgement, the philosophy of *pathei-mathos* is apolitical, and thus not concerned with such matters as the theory and practice of governance, nor with changing or reforming society by political means." {11}

In line with the virtues of his philosophy, Myatt is scathing regarding extremism in general:

"One of the worst consequences of the extremism of extremists - of modern hubris in general - is, or seems to me to be, the loss of what is personal, and thus what is human; the loss of the empathic, the human, scale of things; with what is personal, human, empathic, being or becoming displaced, scorned, forgotten, obscured, or a target for destruction and (often violent) replacement by something supra-personal such as some abstract political/religious notion or concept, or some ideal, or by some prejudice and some often violent intolerance regarding human beings we do not personally know because beyond the range of our empathy.

That is, the human, the personal, the empathic, the natural, the immediate, scale of things - a tolerant and a fair acceptance of *what-is* - is lost and replaced by an artificial scale posited by some ideology or manufactured by some *τύραννος*; a scale in which the suffering of individuals, and strife, are regarded as inevitable, even necessary, in order for 'victory to be achieved' or for some ideal or plan or agenda or manifesto to be implemented. Thus the good, the stability, that exists within society is ignored, with the problems of society - real, imagined, or manufactured by propaganda - trumpeted. There is then incitement to disaffection, with harshness and violent change of and within society regarded as desirable or

necessary in order to achieve preset, predetermined, and always 'urgent' goals and aims, since slow personal reform and change in society - that which appreciates and accepts the good in an existing society and in people over and above the problems and the bad - is anathema to extremists, anathema to their harsh intolerant empathy-lacking nature and to their hubriatic striving." {12}

All this amounts to viewing matters - events in the external world, and our relation to other humans - in terms of two principles rather than in terms of politics, ideology, dogma, or revolutionary social change. The first principle is personal honour; the second what Myatt terms 'the cosmic perspective', of which perspective Myatt writes:

"The Cosmic Perspective reveals a particular truth not only about the Anthropocene (and thus about our φύσις as human beings) but also about how sustainable millennial change has occurred and can occur. Which change is via the progression, the evolution - the development of the faculties and the consciousness - of individuals individually. This is the interior, the a-causal, change of individuals wrought by a scholarly learning of and from our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, by our own pathei-mathos, and by that personal appreciation of the numinous that both the Cosmic Perspective and the muliebral virtues incline us toward. This aeonic change voids what we now describe by the terms politics and religion and direct social activism of the violent type.

There is thus a shift from identifying with the communal, the collective - from identifying with a particular contemporary or a past society or some particular national culture or some particular causal form such as a State or nation or empire or some -ism or some -ology - toward that-which has endured over centuries and millennia: our human culture of pathei-mathos. For the human culture of pathei-mathos records and transmits, in various ways, the pathei-mathos of individuals over thousands of years, manifest as this sustainable millennial culture is in literature, poetry, memoirs, aural stories, in non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and in the experiences - written, recorded, and aural - of those who over the centuries have appreciated the numinous, and those who endured suffering, conflict, disaster, tragedy, and war, and who were fundamentally, interiorly, changed by their experiences." {13}

Given this perspective, and given that personal honour "cannot be extracted out from the living moment and our participation in the moment" {7} and is a necessary virtue, then Myatt's philosophy, while somewhat redolent of Buddhism, Taoism, and the Catholic contemplative tradition, is rather unique in that the personal use of force (including lethal force) in the immediacy of the moment is justified in personal defence of one's self or of others, since

"the personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as

empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη. For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή – of Life, of our φύσις – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη." {14}

Given the mention of wu-wei in many of Myatt's recent writings, it is no surprise that Myatt admits (or, rather, overstates) his debt to Taoism:

"According to my limited understanding and knowledge, I am not expressing anything new here. Indeed, I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I am only re-expressing what I intuitively (and possibly incorrectly) understood nearly half a century ago about Taoism when I lived in the Far East and was taught that ancient philosophy by someone who was also trying to instruct me in a particular Martial Art." {13}

It is therefore possible to speculate that the archetypal follower of Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos - if there were or could be such followers of such a personal philosophy of life - might be akin to one of the following: (i) a reclusive or wandering, or communal living, mystic, concerned only with their interior life and/or with scholarly study, yet prepared - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death; (ii) someone outwardly ordinary who was in, or who was seeking, a loving relationship, and who - compassionate and sensitive and cultured - was unconcerned with politics or conventional religion, and yet prepared - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death; (iii) someone with an interior sense of what is honourable whose occupation or career or way of life enables them, in a personal manner and within their milieu, to individually do what is honourable, fair, and just; and (iv) someone who - compassionate and empathic by nature - whose occupation or career or way of life enables them, in a personal manner and within their milieu, to individually do what is compassionate and who would - in the immediacy of the moment and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable - do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that meant their own death.

In Myatt's view, such individuals would be acting in a wise way - in accord with the aforementioned cosmic perspective - since:

"The only effective, long-lasting, change and reform that does not cause suffering - that is not redolent of ὕβρις - is the one that changes human beings in an individual way by personal example and/or because of πάθει μάθος, and thus interiorly changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and

uncompassionate. That is what, individually, changes or rebalances bad φύσις and thus brings-into-being, or restores, good φύσις." {15}

For:

"It is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate." {11}

### **Extremism, Racism, And Prejudice**

In Myatt's philosophy, the personal knowing of others provided by empathy and the self-knowing that pathei-mathos reveals replace the categorizations by which we have assumed we can know and understand others and ourselves:

"Hitherto, the φύσις of beings and Being has most usually been apprehended, and understood, in one of three ways or by varied combinations of those three ways. The first such perceivation is that deriving from our known physical senses - by Phainómenon - and by what has been posited on the basis of Phainómenon, which has often meant the manufacture, by we human beings, of categories and abstract forms which beings (including living beings) are assigned to on the basis of some feature that has been outwardly observed or which has been assumed to be possessed by some beings or collocation of beings.

The second such perceivation derives from positing a 'primal cause' - often denoted by God, or a god or the gods, but sometimes denoted by some mechanism, or some apparently inscrutable means, such as 'karma' or 'fate' - and then understanding beings (especially living beings) in terms of that cause: for example as subject to, and/or as determined or influenced by or dependant on, that primal cause.

The third such perceivation derives from positing a human faculty of reason and certain rules of reasoning whereby it is possible to dispassionately examine collocations of words and symbols which relate, or which are said to relate, to what is correct (valid, true) or incorrect (invalid, false) and which collocations are considered to be - or which are regarded by their proponents as representative of - either knowledge or as a type of, a guide to,

knowing.

All three of these perceiverations, in essence, involve denotatum, with our being, for example, understood in relation to some-thing we or others have posited and then named and, importantly, consider or believe applies or can apply (i) to those who, by virtue of the assumption of ipseity, are not-us, and (ii) beyond the finite, the living, personal moment of the perceiveration.

Thus, in the case of Phainómenon we have, in assessing and trying to understand our own φύσις as a human being, assumed ipseity - a separation from others - as well as having assigned ourselves (or been assigned by others) to some supra-personal category on the basis of such things as place of birth, skin colour, occupation (or lack of one), familial origin or status (or wealth or religion), something termed 'intelligence', physical ability (or the lack thereof), our natural attraction to those of a different, or the same, gender; and so on." {16}

In Myatt's view, extremism - whether political or religious - makes some category an ideal to be strived for or returned to, since:

"All extremists accept - and all extremisms are founded on - the instinctive belief or the axiom that their cherished ideation(s) or abstraction(s) is or are more important, more valuable, than the individual and the feelings, desires, hopes, and happiness, of the individual. The extremist thus views and understands the world in terms of abstractions; in terms of a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed. Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future.

The abstractions of extremism are manifest in the ideology, which posits or which attempts to explain (however irrationally and intolerantly) some ideated form, some assumed or believed in perfect (ideal) form or category of some-thing, and which ideated form is or can be or should be (according to the ideology) contrasted with what is considered or assumed to be its opposite." {17}

Thus in racism individuals are assigned to, associated with, some 'race' with the various 'races' assigned a qualitative value - describing their 'worth' - based on what some ideology or some ideologue state or believe is their contribution to 'civilization' and on how useful or harmful they might be to those deeming themselves 'superior'.

This is immoral, according to Myatt, not only because it is dishonourable but because of the primacy of empathic, of personal, knowing:

"Everything others associate with an individual, or ascribe to an individual, or use to describe or to denote an individual, or even how an individual denotes or describes themselves, are not relevant, and have no bearing on our understanding, our knowledge, of that individual and thus - morally - should be ignored, for it is our personal knowing of them which is necessary, important, valid, fair. For assessment of another - by the nature of assessment and the nature of empathy - can only be personal, direct, individual. Anything else is biased prejudgement or prejudice or unproven assumption.

This means that we approach them - we view them - without any prejudice, without any expectations, and without having made any assumptions concerning them, and as a unique, still unknown, still undiscovered, individual person: as 'innocent' until proven, until revealed by their actions and behaviour to be, otherwise. Furthermore, empathy - the acausal perception/knowing and revealing of physis - knows nothing of temporal things and human manufactured abstractions/categories such as assumed or assigned ethnicity; nothing of gender; nothing of what is now often termed 'sexual preference/orientation'. Nothing of politics, or religion. Nothing of some disability someone may suffer from; nothing of social status or wealth; nothing regarding occupation (or lack of one). Nothing regarding the views, the opinions, of others concerning someone. For empathy is just empathy, a perception different from our other senses such as sight and hearing, and a perception which provides us, or which can provide us, with a unique perspective, a unique type of knowing, a unique (acausal) connexion to the external world and especially to other human beings.

Empathy - and the knowing that derives from it - thus transcends 'race', politics, religion, gender, sexual orientation, occupation, wealth (or lack of it), 'status', and all the other things and concepts often used to describe, to denote, to prejudge, to classify, a person; so that to judge someone - for example - by and because of their political views (real or assumed) or by their religion or by their sexual orientation is an act of hubris.

In practice, therefore, in the revealing of the physis of a person, the political views, the religion, the gender, the perceived ethnicity, of someone are irrelevant. It is a personal knowing of them, the perception of their physis by empathy, and an acceptance of them as - and getting to know them as - a unique individual which are important and considered moral; for they are one emanation of the Life of which we ourselves are but one other finite and fallible part." {12}

However, Myatt's analysis of extremism goes much further. Based on his forty years of personal experience he considers that the extremist is a particular type of person "by nature or becomes so through association with or because of the influence of others, or because of ideological indoctrination" and that

"it is in the nature of extremists that they disdain, and often despise, the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved over and above the desire for conflict, territorial identity, and for war. Thus we find in extremism a glorification of the masculine at the expense of the muliebral; a definite personal certitude of knowing; a glorification of toughness and aggression and war; an aggressive territorial pride; a tendency to believe, or the forthright assertion, that 'might is right' and *kampf* is necessary; the desire to organize/control; a prominent desire for adventure and/or for conflict/war and/or violence and competition." {17}

Thus, in Myatt's philosophy, the extremist is hubriatic: unbalanced because lacking in - or having rejected or suppressed - the muliebral virtues which are or which should be an essential part of our human nature and the genesis of all culture; with the need for such muliebral virtues, for such a balance, and the necessity of culture, among the important things that 'our culture of *pathei-mathos*' informs us about {18}. Little wonder, then, that

"it is [our] shared human culture of *pathei-mathos* that extremists of whatever kind, and those who advocate -isms and -ologies, scorn and so often try to suppress when, for however short a time, they have political or social or religious power and control over the lives of others. It is this human culture of *pathei-mathos* which - at least according to my experience, my musings, and my retrospection - reveals to us the genesis of wisdom: which is that it is the muliebral virtues which evolve us as conscious beings, which presence sustainable millennial change. Virtues such as empathy, compassion, humility, and that loyal shared personal love which humanizes those masculine talking-mammals of the Anthropocene, and which masculine talking-mammals have - thousand year following thousand year - caused so much suffering to, and killed, so many other living beings, human and otherwise." {13}

Furthermore, according to Myatt:

"Given the masculine nature and the masculine ethos of extremism, it is no surprise that the majority of extremists are men; and given that, in my own opinion, the predominant ethos of the last three millennia - especially within the societies of the West - has been a masculine, patriarchal, one it is no surprise that women were expected to be, and often had no option but to be, subservient, and no surprise therefore that a modern movement has arisen to try and correct the imbalance between the masculine

and the muliebral [...]

[Yet] it is only by using and developing our faculty of empathy, on an individual basis, that we can apprehend and thence understand the muliebral; [for] the muliebral can only be manifested, presenced, individually in our own lives according to that personal, individual, apprehension. Presenced, for example, in our compassion, in our honour, by a personal loyal love, and in that appreciation of innocence and of the numinous that inclines us, as individuals, to reject all prejudice and to distance ourselves from that pride, that certainty-of-knowing about ourselves and those presumptions we make about others, which are so redolent of, and which so presence and have so presenced, the patriarchal ethos." {13}

Extremism and racism, therefore, are understood in Myatt's philosophy in relation to hubris and enantiodromia:

"Enantiodromia is the term used, in the philosophy of pathei-mathos, to describe the revealing, the process, of perceiving, feeling, knowing, beyond causal appearance and the separation-of-otherness and thus when what has become separated – or has been incorrectly perceived as separated – returns to the wholeness, the unity, from whence it came forth. When, that is, beings are understood in their correct relation to Being, beyond the causal abstraction of different/conflicting ideated opposites, and when as a result, a reformation of the individual, occurs. A relation, an appreciation of the numinous, that empathy and pathei-mathos provide, and which relation and which appreciation the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals over millennia have made us aware of or tried to inform us or teach us about." {14}

"For what the culture of pathei-mathos reveals is that we human beings, are - personally - both the cause and the cure of suffering; and that our choice is whether or not we live, or try to live, in a manner which does not intentionally contribute to or which is not the genesis of new suffering. The choice, in effect, to choose the way of harmony - the natural balance - in preference to hubris." {19}

## Conclusion

In his seminal and scholarly essay *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* {19}, Myatt places the ethics of his philosophy in the context of the theories of ethics postulated by Christianity, by Islam, and by the proponents of the modern State. He concludes, in respect of his philosophy and its ethics, that:

"The alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in



balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei. This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others. The personal non-judgemental way, of presumption of innocence and of wu-wei, balanced by, if required, a personal valourous, an honourable, intervention in a personal situation in the immediacy of the moment."

However, this answer is contingent on understanding, via empathy and *pathei-mathos*, not only 'the illusion of ipseity' {16} - the 'separation-of-otherness' - but also the cosmic perspective and thus the temporary nature of all our human manufactured forms, categories, and abstractions, for according to Myatt:

"There has been, as there still is, at least in my view, a failure to appreciate two things. Firstly, the causal (the mortal) nature of all forms: from institutions, governments, laws, States, nations, movements, societies, organizations, empires, to leaders and those embodying in some manner the authority, the *volksgeist*, the ideations, the principles, the aspirations, of their time. Secondly, and possibly most important of all, that what is muliebral cannot be embodied in some organization or movement, or in some *-ism*, or in any causal form - and certainly cannot be expressed via the medium of words, whether spoken or written - without changing it, distorting it, from what it is into some-thing else. For the muliebral by its very φύσις is personal, individual, in nature and only presenced in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and thus cannot be the object of a supra-personal aspiration and thus should not be 'idealized' or even be the subject of an endeavour to express it in some principles or principles (political or otherwise), or by some axiom or axioms, or by some dogma. For all such things - forms and words included - are manifestations, a presencing, of what is, in φύσις, masculous and temporal. Or, expressed more simply, the muliebral presences and manifests what is a-causal - what, in the past, has often inclined us to appreciate the numinous - while the masculous presences and manifests what is causal, temporal, and what in the past has often inclined us toward hubris and being egoistic." {13}

Myatt's comprehensive philosophy - propounded in various writings between 2012 and 2014 and which he recently described as being just his personal *weltanschauung* rather than a philosophy {20} - thus provides an interesting, intriguing, and insightful if iconoclastic, analysis of extremism and contemporary society as well as offering an understandable ethics centred on personal honour, a rather mystical ontology, and a somewhat mystical answer to the question of existence; and although his philosophy certainly deserves

to be more widely studied and more widely appreciated, it will doubtless - given Myatt's outré and controversial life - continue to be neglected for many, many, decades to come.

## Notes

{1} (a) Barnett, Antony. *Right here, right now*, The Observer, February 9, 2003. (b) Michael, George. *The Enemy of My Enemy: The Alarming Convergence of Militant Islam and the Extreme Right*. University Press of Kansas, 2006, p. 142ff.

{2} *Searchlight*, July 2000.

{3} Amis, Martin. *The Second Plane*. Jonathan Cape, 2008, p.157

{4} (a) Simon Wiesenthal Center: *Response*, Summer 2003, Vol 24, #2. (b) Wistrich, Robert S. *A Lethal Obsession: Anti-Semitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad*, Random House, 2010.

{5} (a) Myatt, David. *Myngath - Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life*. 2013. 978-1484110744. (b) Myatt, David. *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. 978-1484854266

{6} Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos is described in the following three published collections of his essays: (a) *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484096642. (b) *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. 2014. 978-1502396105. (c) *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484097984

The three collections of essays are also available, as of October 2014 and as pdf files, from his weblog at <http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/>

{7} Of the virtue of personal honour, Myatt writes that it

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme [...]"

[For] such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-

mathos." *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*, in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{8} Myatt, David. *Let Us Then Try What Love Can Do*. 2012. e-text.

{9} *The Development of the Numinous Way*. The essay is included, as an appendix, in the printed version of his autobiography *Myngath*, 978-1484110744

{10} *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in Myatt's book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{11} *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{12} *Some Personal Musings On Empathy In Relation to the Philosophy of πάθει μάθος*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{13} *Some Questions For DWM*. 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 2014, 978-1502396105

{14} *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. 978-1484096642

{15} *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484096642

{16} See: (a) *Toward Understand The Acausal*, and (b) *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. Both essays are included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 2014, 978-1502396105

{17} Myatt, David. *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. 978-1484854266

{18} Regarding 'the culture of pathei-mathos' - a key part of his philosophy - see Myatt's 2014 essay *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, which is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*, 978-1502396105

{19} *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

ooo

## **Part Two: Humility, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos**

The prevailing character of David Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos is evident in one of his most recent essays, for he writes:

"What I have previously described as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' and the 'way of pathei-mathos' is simply my own weltanschauung, a weltanschauung developed over some years as a result of my own pathei-mathos. Thus, and despite whatever veracity it may or may not possess, it is only the personal insight of one very fallible individual, a fallibility proven by my decades of selfishness and by my decades of reprehensible extremism both political and religious. Furthermore, and according to my admittedly limited understanding and limited knowledge, this philosophy does not - in essence - express anything new. For I feel (and I use the word 'feel' intentionally) that I have only re-expressed what so many others, over millennia, have expressed as result of (i) their own pathei-mathos and/or (ii) their experiences/insights and/or (iii) their particular philosophical musings.

Indeed, the more I reflect upon my (perhaps pretentiously entitled) 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' the more I reminded of so many things..." {1}

The character is that of a person who, aware and accepting of their past mistakes, is presenting the conclusions of many years of personal contemplation about such metaphysical and personal matters as interest them, which conclusions they qualify with a proviso of fallibility. The ethos of Myatt's philosophy is therefore both in tone and in content redolent of the mystic, but of a mystic who - perhaps because of his extremist past - is well aware of the causes and consequences of suffering:

"For me, there is a knowing of how limited and fallible my knowledge and understanding are, combined with an intangible intimation of some-thing possibly existing which is so abstruse that any and all attempts - at least by me - to meld it into words, and thus form and confine it into some idea or ideas, would miss or distort its essence. An intimation of what terms such as 'acausal' and 'numinous' (and even θεός/θεοί) do little to describe, hinting as such terms do of externalities - of an 'out there' - whereas this some-thing is an intrinsic part of us, connecting us to all life, human, terran, and otherwise, and thus reveals our φύσις - our relation to beings and Being - behind the appearance that is our conception of our separate self. An intimation thus of our brief causality of mortal life being only one momentary microcosmic presencing of that-which we it seems have a faculty to apprehend, and a that-which which lives-on both before and after our brief moment of apprehended causal life.

Yet this some-thing that I sense is no mystical divinity of a supra-personal love to be sought individually and which, if found or gifted to us, eremitically removes us from the mortal pains and joys of life. Suffering, and the pain so caused, are real; and if we ourselves are unafflicted, others are not and may never be so unafflicted if we

humans do not or cannot fundamentally change." {2}

It is therefore not surprising, given this mysticism, that humility is one of the personal virtues of Myatt's philosophy. Of humility, Myatt writes that he is using the term

"in a spiritual context to refer to that gentleness, that modest demeanour, that understanding, which derives from an appreciation of the numinous and also from one's own admitted uncertainty of knowing and one's acknowledgement of past mistakes. An uncertainty of knowing, an acknowledgement of mistakes, that often derive from πάθει μάθος.

Humility is thus the natural human balance that offsets the unbalance of hubris (ὑβρις) - the balance that offsets the unbalance of pride and arrogance, and the balance that offsets the unbalance of that certainty of knowing which is one basis for extremism, for extremist beliefs, for fanaticism and intolerance. That is, humility is a manifestation of the natural balance of Life; a restoration of ἁρμονίη, of δίκη, of σωφρονεῖν - of those qualities and virtues - that hubris and extremism, that ἔρις and πόλεμος, undermine, distance us from, and replace." {3}

This passage is notable for two reasons. First, for the fact that the virtue of humility is - along with the other personal moral qualities of Myatt's philosophy - the result of that 'acausal knowing' that Myatt considers both pathei-mathos and empathy can provide; and second, for his use of ancient Greek terminology, a usage which hints that his mysticism - his philosophy - is influenced by, or is a modern manifestation of, an ancient paganism rather than part of the Christian mystical and contemplative traditions.

Myatt himself acknowledges this pagan influence:

"The philosophy of pathei-mathos is the result of my own pathei-mathos, my own learning from diverse - sometimes outré, sometimes radical and often practical - ways of life and experiences over some four decades; of my subsequent reasoned analysis, over a period of several years, of those ways and those experiences; of certain personal intuitions, spread over several decades, regarding the numinous; of an interior process of personal and moral reflexion, lasting several years and deriving from a personal tragedy; and of my life-long study and appreciation of Hellenic culture, an appreciation that led me to translate works by Sappho, Sophocles, Aeschylus and Homer, and involved me in a detailed consideration of the weltanschauung of individuals such as Heraclitus (insofar as such weltanschauungen are known from recorded sayings and surviving books).

Given this appreciation, and as the name suggests, the philosophy of πάθει μάθος has certain connexions to Hellenic culture and I tend therefore to use certain Greek words in order to try and

elucidate my meaning and/or to express certain philosophical principles regarded as important in - and for an understanding of - this philosophy; a usage of words which I have endeavoured to explain as and where necessary, sometimes by quoting passages from Hellenic literature or other works and by providing translations of such passages. For it would be correct to assume that the ethos of this philosophy is somewhat indebted to and yet - and importantly - is also a development of the ethos of Hellenic culture; an indebtedness obvious in notions such as δίκη, πάθει μάθος, avoidance of ὕβρις, and references to Heraclitus, Aeschylus, and others, and a development manifest in notions such as empathy and the importance attached to the virtue of compassion." {4}

### **Acausal Knowing and Pathei Mathos**

In a recent précis of his philosophy Myatt enumerates the three fundamentals of his epistemology:

" a. The primacy of pathei-mathos: of a personal pathei-mathos being one of the primary means whereby we can come to know the true φύσις (physis) of Being, of beings, and of our own being; a knowing beyond 'abstractions', beyond the concealment implicit in manufactured opposites, by ipseity (the separation-of-otherness), and by denotatum.

b. Adding the 'acausal knowing' revealed by the (muliebral) faculty of empathy to the conventional, and causal (and somewhat masculous), knowing of science and logical philosophical speculation, with the proviso that what such 'acausal knowing' reveals is (i) of φύσις, the relation between beings, and between beings and Being, and thus of 'the separation-of-otherness', and (ii) the personal and numinous nature of such knowing in the immediacy-of-the-moment, and which empathic knowing thus cannot be abstracted out from that 'living moment' via denotatum: by (words written or spoken), or be named or described or expressed (become fixed or 'known') by any dogma or any -ism or any -ology, be such -isms or -ologies conventionally understood as political, religious, ideological, or social.

c. Describing a human, and world-wide and ancestral, 'culture of pathei-mathos', and which culture of pathei-mathos could form part of Studia Humanitatis and thus of that education that enables we human beings to better understand our own φύσις." {1}

Thus, for Myatt, knowledge and understanding of Reality - of beings and Being, and of our own relation to beings and Being - requires us to use or develop our faculty of empathy (of sympatheia with other living beings, human and otherwise) as well as both studying and appreciating our 'aeonic' human culture of pathei-mathos and learning via our own experiences,

suffering, and grief (our own pathei-mathos). The latter of which - that is, pathei-mathos - naturally not only cultivates a certain personal humility but also means that we cannot hope to know and understand Reality - we cannot discover wisdom - unless and until we ourselves have a certain experience of the vicissitudes of life.

Given (i) that the acausal knowing that empathy reveals,

"is a direct and personal - an individual - revealing of beings and Being which does not depend on denoting or naming or causality or the assumption of a primal cause, and which knowing, being individual in φύσις and concerned with living beings, cannot be abstracted out from the living personal moment of the perceivization. Thus, such a perceivization - in respect of other human beings - does not and cannot involve and does not and cannot lead to any of the following: (i) any personal claim regarding possessing 'the truth' about some-thing; (ii) no 'correct way or praxis' or dogma or ideology which are assumed or believed to be applicable to anyone else; (iii) no understanding of or assumption of knowledge about others on the basis of assigning those others to some category or to some abstract form. Instead, there is only an intuition of the moment concerning one's own φύσις and thus a wordless individual revealing of - a numinous knowing concerning - one's own being and of one's own relation to Being and to other living beings" {5}

and given (ii) the necessity of (a) pathei-mathos and (b) studying and learning from our aeonic human culture of pathei-mathos, and (ii) given the personal virtues - such as compassion, humility, and a personal honour - that are engendered by such acausal knowing {6}, such a study, and such a pathei-mathos, then it is my view that Myatt's whole philosophy can be summarized as a guide to living in an honourable, and a particular type of pagan, way.

For, of the knowing and understanding that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal, Myatt writes:

"Empathy is, and has been, the natural basis for a tradition which informs us, and reminds us - through Art, literature, myths, legends, the accumulated πάθει μάθος of individuals, and often through a religious-type awareness - of the need for a balance, for ἁρμονίη, achieved by not going beyond the numinous limits.

As a used and a developed faculty, the perception that empathy provides is of undivided ψυχή and of the emanations of ψυχή, of our place in the Cosmic Perspective: of how we are a connexion to other life; of how we are but one mortal fallible emanation of Life; of how we affect or can affect the well-being - the very being, ψυχή - of other mortals and other life; and how other mortals and other living beings interact with us and can affect us, in a good or a harmful way.

Empathy thus involves a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being *is*, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections. In a simple way, empathy involves a numinous sympathy with another living-being; a becoming – for a causal moment or moments – of that other-being, so that we know, can feel, can understand, the suffering or the joy of that living-being. In such moments, there is no distinction made between *them and us* – there is only the flow of life; only the presencing and the ultimate unity of Life itself." {4}

"The numinous sympathy - *συμπάθεια* (sympatheia, benignity) - with another living being that empathy provides naturally inclines us to treat other living beings as we ourselves would wish to be treated: with fairness, compassion, honour, and dignity. It also inclines us not to judge those whom we do not know; those beyond the purveu - beyond the range of - our faculty of empathy." {6}

For, regarding personal honour, Myatt writes that it:

"presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία - as (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme [...]

Such honour - by its and our φύσις - is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment; for it only through such things as a personal study of the culture of pathei-mathos and the development of the faculty of empathy that a person who does not naturally possess the instinct for δίκη can develop what is essentially 'the human faculty of honour', and which faculty is often appreciated and/or discovered via our own personal pathei-mathos." {1}

For, regarding paganism, Myatt - quoting Cicero - writes that, correctly understood (that is, in the classical sense), it is:

"An apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivation that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself." {7}



## **An Honourable, Paganus, And Cultured, Way of Life**

What Myatt has developed in his philosophy of pathei-mathos is, essentially, a contemporary mystical 'paganus' philosophy in the classical tradition, and thus one which dispenses with all the unnecessary accretions, and misunderstandings, of the past century that have become attached to 'modern paganism'. For at the heart of Myatt's individualistic paganism are the virtues of personal honour, of learning, of education, of culture, of self-restraint [ἐνταξία] and of duty, for:

"this paganus natural balance implied an acceptance by the individual of certain communal responsibilities and duties; of such responsibilities and duties, and their cultivation, as a natural and necessary part of our existence as mortals." {7}

Which is why Myatt's paganus philosophy emphasises wu-wei {8}, and tolerance; and why it is (i) concerned, not with politics or reforming society through some -ism or -ology or via some revolution violent or otherwise, but rather with the individual - with their interior life, with their personal interaction with others, with the numinosity of love {9}, with honourable living - and (ii) concerned with the individual agreeing to Ἀπόδοτε οὖν τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι καὶ τὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ τῷ Θεῷ {10}.

Thus:

"There is no desire and no need to use any confrontational means to directly challenge and confront the authority of existing States since numinous reform and change is personal, individual, non-political, and not organized beyond a limited local [communal] level of people personally known. That is, it is of and involves individuals who are personally known to each other working together based on the understanding that it is inner, personal, change - in individuals, of their nature, their character - that is is the ethical, the numinous, way to solve such personal and social problems as exist and arise. That such inner change of necessity comes before any striving for outer change by whatever means, whether such means be termed or classified as political, social, economic, religious. That the only effective, long-lasting, change and reform is understood as the one that evolves human beings and thus changes what, in them, predisposes them, or inclines them toward, doing or what urges them to do, what is dishonourable, undignified, unfair, and uncompassionate.

In practice, this evolution means, in the individual, the cultivation and use of the faculty of empathy, and acquiring the personal virtues of compassion, honour, and love. Which means the inner reformation of individuals, as individuals.

Hence the basis for numinous social change and reform is aiding, helping, assisting individuals in a direct and personal manner, and

in practical ways, with such help, assistance, and aid arising because we personally know or are personally concerned about or involved with those individuals or the situations those individuals find themselves in. In brief, being compassionate, empathic, understanding, sensitive, kind, and showing by personal example." {11}

In effect, therefore, Myatt's philosophy, with its specific (if not unique) epistemology, and its virtues such as that of a personal honour, leads to:

"An understanding of (i) how good and bad are not 'out there' and cannot be manifest or assumed to be manifest in some form, by some ideation, or in 'them' (the others), without causing or contributing to or being the genesis of suffering, but instead are within us as individuals, a part of our nature, our character, our φύσις, and often divergently expressed; and (ii) of how, in my view at least, personal honour and not a codified law, not a jurisprudence, is the best, the most excellent, way to define and manifest this 'good', with honour understood, as in my philosophy of pathei-mathos, as an instinct for and an adherence to what is fair, dignified, and valourous.

An honourable person is thus someone of manners, fairness, reasoned judgement, and valour; with honour being a means to live, to behave, in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις; in order try and avoid causing suffering, and in order to rediscover, to acquire, ἀρμονίη, that natural balance that presences the numinous (sans denotatum and sans dogma) and thus reveals what is important about life and about being human." {12}

For it is living in such an honourable way, with such an understanding, that can provide the individual with opportunities to experience, and thence learn from, of the vicissitudes of life because such a way of honourable living means - as I mentioned in Part One - the person being prepared in the immediacy of the moment, and when confronted by someone or some group being dishonourable, to do what is honourable in defence of themselves or others even if that means their own death.

Given that living in such an honourable way with such an understanding was, for thousands of years, the essence of paganism, Myatt is be commended for developing a contemporary mystical paganus philosophy.

R. Parker  
2014

### *Notes*

{1} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos - A Précis*. 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical*

*Musings*. 978-1502396105

{2} *A Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*. 2014. The essay is included in the 2014 compilation whose title is taken from the title of that essay: *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{3} *Pathei-Mathos - A Path To Humility*. 2012.

{4} *The Way of Pathei-Mathos - A Philosophical Compendium*. 2012. The essay is included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013, 978-1484096642

It is obvious from Myatt's writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos that by the term 'Hellenic culture' he sometimes means the culture of ancient Greece. He thus - perhaps pedantically, perhaps idiosyncratically - sometimes eschews the relatively modern division of ancient Greek culture into a 'classical' period and a 'Hellenistic' period, although - confusingly - in some of his writings he does make such a distinction. As often, what he means by Hellenic is provided by the context.

{5} *Toward Understand The Acausal*, 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{6} *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*. 2012. The essay is included in Myatt's *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*.

{7} *Education And The Culture Of Pathei-Mathos*, 2014. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*.

{8} In his *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, published in 2012, and included as an 'appendix of terms' in his book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Myatt writes:

"Wu-wei is a Taoist term used in *The Way of Pathei-Mathos* to refer to a personal 'letting-be' deriving from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive – that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous.

In practice, the knowledge, the understanding, the intuition, the insight that is wu-wei is a knowledge, an understanding, that can be acquired from empathy, πάθει μάθος, and by a knowing of and an appreciation of the numinous. This knowledge and

understanding is of wholeness, and that life, things/beings, change, flow, exist, in certain natural ways which we human beings cannot change however hard we might try; that such a hardness of human trying, a belief in such hardness, is unwise, un-natural, upsets the natural balance and can cause misfortune/suffering for us and/or for others, now or in the future. Thus success lies in discovering the inner nature (the physis) of things/beings/ourselves and gently, naturally, slowly, working with this inner nature, not striving against it."

{9} Myatt ends his autobiography, *Myngath*, by writing that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all."

{10} Myatt approvingly quotes this saying - attributed to Jesus of Nazareth - in his 2013 essay *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

{11} *Society, Politics, Social Reform, and Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 2013, 978-1484096642

{12} *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*. 2013. The essay is included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, 978-1484097984

---

## V. Classical Paganism And A New Metaphysics

In November of 2017 Myatt published his book *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* in which he described his view of the difference between Christianity and the paganism of Ancient Greece and Rome and set out to, in his words, develop that "paganism in a metaphysical way, beyond the deities of classical mythos."

This was followed a month later by his *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* and in which iconoclastic work he provided his answers to particular metaphysical questions such as whether Christianity really is a suitable presencing of the numinous. If it is not, "then what non-Christian alternatives - such as a paganus metaphysics - exist, and what is the foundation of such an alternative."

While these books are not expositions of his philosophy they nevertheless provide interesting and relevant insights into Christianity and classical paganism as well as illuminate particular aspects of his own philosophy. For instance, in *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* he writes that "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. In *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* he writes that "the quintessence of such a weltanschauung, of the paganus ethos, is that

ethics are presented in and by particular living individuals, not in some written text whether philosophical or otherwise, not by some proposed schemata, and not in some revelation from some deity."

In both books he makes use of the Greek term *καλὸς κάγαθός* stating, in *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, that this

"means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through *pathei-mathos* or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character."

In *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* he writes that

"*καλὸς κάγαθός* is an awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (*omni utilitate*) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnipotent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do [...]"

[T]he virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous."

Which in my view neatly sums up his philosophy of *pathei-mathos*, particularly given his statement that the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral, and that

"a muliebral presencing is or would be manifest [in] muliebral virtues, such as empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion; and in the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions. Considered exoterically - not interiorly, not esoterically - a muliebral presencing is manifest in a personal, varied, worship and devotion; in a personal *weltanschauung* and not in a religion; has no hierarchy; no creed, no article or articles of faith; and no texts whether written or aural."

As he notes in his short essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* {1}, "the faculty of empathy is the transition from *mythoi* and anthropomorphic deities (*theos* and *theoi*) to an appreciation of the numinous *sans denotatum* and *sans religion*."

He thus outlines a new 'pagan' metaphysics, or rather provides an understandable description of his own *weltanschauung*, which is

"of we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin,

the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies.

An awareness of all these connexions is awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous, for these connexions, being acausal, are affective: that is, we are inclined by our physis (whether we apprehend it or not) to have an influence on that which, or those whom, the connexion is to or from. For what we do or do not do, consciously or otherwise, affects or can affect the cosmos and thus the other living beings which exist in the cosmos, and it is a conscious awareness of connexions and acausal affects, with their causal consequences, which reason, perceivance, and empathy make us - or can make us - aware of. Which awareness may incline us toward acting, and living, in a noble way, with what is noble known or experienced, discovered, through and because of (i) the personal virtue of honour, evident as honour is in fairness, manners and a balanced demeanour, and (ii) the wordless knowing of empathy, manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance.

For Being is also, and importantly, presenced - manifest to us, as mortals possessed of reason, empathy, and perceivance - through certain types of individuals and thus through the particular ways of living that nurture or encourage such individuals. These types of individuals are those who have empathy and who live and if necessary die by honour and thus who have nobility of character."  
{2}

Those "certain types of individuals" who presence Being are of course those who manifest καλὸς κἀγαθός, and thus those who, in Myatt's words, manifest chivalry, manners, gentrified romance; and the muliebral virtues, {3} which virtues include "empathy, sensitivity, gentleness, compassion" as well as "the perception that personal love should triumph over and above adherence to abstractions." {4}

JR Wright  
2018

{1} The essay is included here as Appendix III.

{2} *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, Epilogos.

{3} *From Mythoi To Empathy*.

{4} *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, chapter III.

---

## Appendix I

### A Note On Greek Terms In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

As I mentioned in the *A Philosophical Compendiary* chapter of my book *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, my philosophy of pathei-mathos has connexions to the culture of ancient Greece, exemplified by the many Greek terms and phrases I use in an attempt to express certain philosophical concepts. Such use of such terms also serves to intimate that my philosophy has some connexion to the Graeco-Roman mystical, and paganus, traditions, one of which traditions is outlined in the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum where it is written that

"...every psyche - embodied in flesh - can  
By the mirificence of the circumferent deities coursing the heavens  
Apprehend the heavens, and honour, and physis presenced, and the works of  
theos;  
Can understand divine influence as wyrdful change  
And thus, regarding what is good and what is bad, discover all the arts of  
honour." [1]

Furthermore, I also - and perhaps (as you mention) somewhat confusingly - use certain Greek and Latin terms in a specific way, such that the meaning I assign to them is not necessarily identical to how they were understood in classical times or the same as the meaning ascribed to them in modern Greek and Latin lexicons. A few examples being συμπάθεια, δίκη, φύσις, ἁρμονία, perfectus, ἅγιος, and σωφρονεῖν.

Thus I understand ἅγιος - qv. my translation of and commentary on the Pœmandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum - not as the conventional 'holy'/sacred but rather as implying the numinous/numinosity, for I incline toward the view that the English words holy and sacred have too many modern connotations, Christian and otherwise, whereas numinous/numinosity still have the advantage of being religiously neutral and thus can intimate what an ancient paganus tradition may well have intimated. Hence also why and for example I in that tractate chose to translate ἀρχέτυπον εἶδος as 'quidditas of semblance' [2] rather than use (as some other translators have) an expression that included the word 'archetype' since that word has modern connotations that detract from (that can falsify) the meaning of the original Greek.

Another example, from the many, is φύσις which I use contextually to refer to not only its Homeric and later Aristotelian sense - of personal character, Nature, and the unfolding/change of being, respectively [3] - but also to what I have philosophically described as the unity (the being/Being) beyond the division of our φύσις, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral and a division we have made via abstractions (including 'forms'; the ἰδέα/εἶδος of Plato) and denotatum.

Yet another example is σωφρονεῖν which I use - in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη - as a synonym for "a fair and balanced personal,

individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) whereas in classical and Hellenic terms the expression should be τὸ σωφρονεῖν/εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν which imply 'to be discreet (Ag. 1425), being moderate, having good judgement', and so on. Here, as with Δίκη (in preference to δίκη) I have used a form or variant of a specific Greek word in order to suggest a modern philosophical meaning (or principle) and differentiate it from the conventional lexicographic meaning. But it would perhaps, with the hindsight of some years, have been better to avoid confusion and instead given and then used transliterations - sophronein, Dika - as I did (following the example of Jung) with ἐναντιοδομίας/enantiodromia. That is, using the transliterations as Anglicized terms, as I do with my usage of πάθει μάθος - especially when the transliteration is employed - for such Anglicized terms do not follow the correct Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

In other words, my usage of some Greek terms - and the meaning I assign to some others - is somewhat idiosyncratic, often philosophical; and although I have endeavoured to explain my usage and meaning in essays and commentaries, obviously this has not always been successful or as pedantic as it perhaps should have been.

Thus when I, some years ago now, first published my translation of fragment 1 of Heraclitus - without commentary - it led to a Greek scholar, then in Oxford, to ask about my seeming neglect of ἀεὶ. In correspondence I explained my usage, later incorporating part of that correspondence into a brief commentary which I appended to the translation, writing in the commentary that "in my view, *tend to* captures the poetic sense of ἀεὶ here. That is, the literal - the bland, strident - 'always' is discarded in favour of a more Heraclitean expression of human beings having an apparently rather irreconcilable tendency - both now and as in the past - to ignore (or forget or not understand) certain things, even after matters have been explained to them (they have heard the explanation) and even after they have discovered certain truths for themselves." [4]

Therefore, and as I mentioned in the introduction to my *Poemandres*, some may well consider the words of Diogenes Laertius about Plato - *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 3.1 (64) - apposite in relation to my idiosyncratic use of some Greek terms:

χρῆται δὲ ὁ Πλάτων ἐνίοτε αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ κακοῦ: ἔστι δ' ὅτε καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ μικροῦ. πολλάκις δὲ καὶ διαφέρουσιν ὀνόμασιν ἐπὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ  
σημαινομένου χρῆται.

David Myatt  
2015

Extract from a letter to an academic correspondent, with footnotes added post scriptum.



[1] My translation, from *Ιερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*. Included in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017. 978-1976452369.

[2] Quidditas being 11th/12th century post-classical Latin, from whence derived the scholastic term 'quiddity'.

[3] *Towards Understanding Physis*. The essay is included in *Sarigthersa: Some Recent Essays*. 2015.

[4] "Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

The translation - together with the Greek text and a brief commentary - is included as an appendix to *Towards Understanding Physis*.

---

## Appendix II

### Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture

As manifest in my weltanschauung, based as that weltanschauung is on pathei-mathos and an appreciation of Greco-Roman culture, the term Ancestral Culture is synonymous with Ancestral Custom, with Ancestral Custom represented in Ancient Greek mythoi by Δίκη, the goddess Fairness as described by Hesiod:

σὺ δ' ἄκουε δίκης, μηδ' ὕβριν ὄφελλε:  
ὕβρις γάρ τε κακὴ δειλῶ βροτῶ: οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλὸς  
215 ῥηιδίως φερέμεν δύνатаι, βαρύθει δέ θ' ὑπ' αὐτῆς  
ἐγκύρσας ἄτησιν: ὁδὸς δ' ἐτέρηφι παρελθεῖν  
κρείσσων ἐς τὰ δίκαια: Δίκη δ' ὑπὲρ ὕβριος ἴσχει  
ἐς τέλος ἐξελθοῦσα: παθὼν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

You should listen to Fairness and not oblige Hubris  
Since Hubris harms unfortunate mortals while even the more fortunate  
Are not equal to carrying that heavy a burden, meeting as they do with Mischief.  
The best path to take is the opposite one: that of honour  
For, in the end, Fairness is above Hubris  
Which is something the young come to learn from adversity.

That Δίκη is generally described as the goddess of 'justice' - as 'Judgement' personified - is unfortunate given that the terms 'justice' and 'judgement' have modern, abstract, and legalistic, connotations which are inappropriate and which detract from understanding and appreciating the mythoi of Ancient Greece and Rome.

Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονίη (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον [1]. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini:

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora,  
et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned. [2]

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονίη and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner, part of which comportment is living and if necessary dying in a honourable, a noble, manner. For personal honour presences τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν, and thus the numinous.

For in practice honour manifests the customary, the ancestral way, of those who are noble, those who presence fairness; those who restore balance; those who (even at some cost to themselves) are fair due to their innate physis or because they have been nurtured to be so. For this ancestral way - such ancestral custom - is what is expected in terms of personal behaviour based on past personal examples and thus often manifests the accumulated wisdom of previous generations.

Thus, an important - perhaps even ethos-defining - Ancestral Custom of Greco-Roman culture, and of Western culture born as Western culture was from medieval mythoi involving Knights and courtly romance and from the re-discovery of Greco-Roman culture that began the Renaissance, is chivalry and which personal virtue - presencing the numinous as it does and did - is not and cannot be subject to any qualifications or exceptions and cannot be confined to or manifest by anything so supra-personal as a particular religion or anything so supra-personal as a political dogma or ideology.

Hence, the modern paganus weltanschauung that I mentioned in my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* as a means "to reconnect those

in the lands of the West, and those in Western émigré lands and former colonies of the West, with their ancestral ethos," is one founded on καλὸς κάγαθός. That is, on chivalry; on manners; on gentrified romance; and on the muliebral virtues, the gender equality, inherent in both chivalry and personal manners, consciously and rationally understood as chivalry and manners now are as a consequence of both our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos and of our empathic (wordless) and personal apprehension of the numinous.

David Myatt  
January 2018

[1] "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2. Corpus Hermeticum. Ἑρμοῦ πρὸς Τάτ ὁ κρατῆρ ἡ μονάς.

[2] De Vita Coelitus Comparanda. XXVI.

---

### Appendix III

#### From Mythoi To Empathy Toward A New Appreciation Of The Numinous

Since the concept of the numinous is central to my weltanschauung - otherwise known as the 'philosophy of pathei-mathos' - it seems apposite to provide, as I did in respect of my use of the term physis, φύσις [1], a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from the classical Latin numen which denoted "a reverence for the divine; a divinity; divine power" with the word numen assimilated into English in the 15th century, with the English use of 'numinous' dating from the middle of the 17th century and used to signify "of or relating to a numen; revealing or indicating the presence of a divinity; divine, spiritual."

The term numinous was also used in a somewhat restrictive religious way [2] by Rudolf Otto over a century ago in his book *Das Heilige*.

In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivance, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of *a priori*. As a perceivance, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning,

"the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance – our being as human beings – is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." [3]

Where ψυχή is an intimation of, an intuition concerning Life *qua* being; of ourselves as a living existent considered as an emanation of ψυχή, howsoever ψυχή is described, as for example in mythoi - and thus in terms of theos, theoi, or 'Nature' - with ψυχή thus what 'animates' us and what gives us our φύσις as human beings. A physis classically perceived to be that of a mortal fallible being veering between σωφρονεῖν (thoughtful reasoning, and thus fairness) and ὕβρις. [4]

The particular apprehension of external reality that is the numinous is that provided by our natural faculty of empathy, ἐμπάθεια. When this particular faculty is developed and used then it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings. The type of 'knowing' - and thence the understanding - that empathy provides or can provide is different from, but supplementary and complimentary to, that knowing which may be acquired by means of the Aristotelian essentials of conventional philosophy and experimental science.

Furthermore, since empathy is a natural and an individual human faculty, it

"is limited in range and application, just as our faculties of sight and hearing are limited in range and application. These limits extend to only what is direct, immediate, and involve personal interactions with other humans or with other living beings. There is therefore, for the philosophy of pathei-mathos, an 'empathic scale of things' and an acceptance of our limitations of personal knowing and personal understanding." [5]

That is, as I explained in my 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, there is a 'local horizon of empathy'.

This local horizon and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis.

It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves.

Which intimation, given the nature of empathy - with its συμπάθεια, with its wordless knowing of actually being for a moment or for moments 'the living other' - is of muliebral virtues such as compassion, manners, and a certain personal humility, and of how a shared, mutual, personal love can and does presence the numinous. Which intimation, which wisdom, which knowing, is exactly that of our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos, and which culture - with its personal recounting, and artistic renderings, of tragedy, love, loss, suffering, and war - is a far better guide to the numinous than conventional religions. [6]

All of which is why I wrote in my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* that in my view "the numinous is primarily a manifestation of the muliebral," and that revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Judaism primarily manifest a presencing of the masculous. Such religions - indeed all religions - therefore have not presenced, and do not and cannot presence, the numinous as the numinous can be presenced. Neither did Greco-Roman culture, for all its assimilation of some muliebral mythoi, adequately presence the numinous, and just as no modern organized paganus revival dependant on mythoi and anthropomorphic deities can adequately presence the numinous.

For the cultivation of the faculty of empathy is the transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion.

#### **A New Appreciation Of The Numinous**

How then can the faculty of empathy be cultivated? My own practical experience of various religions, as well as my own pathei-mathos, inclines me to favour the personal cultivation of muliebral virtues and a return to a more local, a less organized, way or ways of living based initially on a personal and mutual and loyal love between two individuals. A living of necessity balanced by personal honour given how the world is still replete with dishonourable hubriatic individuals who, devoid of empathy, are often motivated by the worst of intentions. For such a personal honour - in the immediacy of the personal moment - is a necessary restoration of the numinous balance that the dishonourable deeds of a hubriatic individual or individuals upsets [7].

For such a personal love, such a preparedness to restore the natural balance through honour, are - in my admittedly fallible view - far more adequate presencings of the numinous than any religious ritual, than any religious worship, or any type of contemplative (wordless) prayer.

David Myatt  
January 2018

[1] *Toward Understanding Physis*. Included in the 2015 compilation *Sarigthersa*.

[2] I have endeavoured in recent years to make a distinction between a

religion and a spiritual 'way of life'. As noted in my 2013 text *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *Religion*,

"One of the differences being that a religion requires and manifests a codified ritual and doctrine and a certain expectation of conformity in terms of doctrine and ritual, as well as a certain organization beyond the local community level resulting in particular individuals assuming or being appointed to positions of authority in matters relating to that religion. In contrast, Ways are more diverse and more an expression of a spiritual ethos, of a customary, and often localized, way of doing certain spiritual things, with there generally being little or no organization beyond the community level and no individuals assuming - or being appointed by some organization - to positions of authority in matters relating to that ethos.

Religions thus tend to develop an organized regulatory and supra-local hierarchy which oversees and appoints those, such as priests or religious teachers, regarded as proficient in spiritual matters and in matters of doctrine and ritual, whereas adherents of Ways tend to locally and informally and communally, and out of respect and a personal knowing, accept certain individuals as having a detailed knowledge and an understanding of the ethos and the practices of that Way. Many spiritual Ways have evolved into religions."

Another difference is that religions tend to presence and be biased toward the masculine, while spiritual ways tend to be either more muliebral or incorporate muliebral virtues.

[3] Myatt, David. *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 2017. Appendix II - Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos, *The Numinous*.

[4] In my note *Concerning σωφρονεῖν* - included in my "revised 2455621.531" version of *The Balance of Physis - Notes on λόγος and ἀληθεία in Heraclitus. Part One, Fragment 112* - I mentioned that I use σωφρονεῖν (sophronein) in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) since sophrosyne has acquired an English interpretation - "soundness of mind, moderation" - which in my view distorts the meaning of the original Greek. As with my use of the term πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) I use σωφρονεῖν in an Anglicized manner with there thus being no necessity to employ inflective forms.

[5] Myatt, *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. Appendix II - *Immediacy-of-the-Moment*.

[6] One aspect of the apprehension of the numinous that empathy provides - which I have briefly touched upon in various recent personal writings - is that personal love is personal love; personal, mutual, equal, and germane to the moment and to a person. It thus does not adhere to manufactured or assumed abstractive boundaries such as gender, social status, or nationality,

with enforced adherence to such presumptive boundaries - such as opposition to same gender love whether from religious or political beliefs - contrary to empathy and a cause of suffering.

[7] As mentioned in my *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*,

"The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are - together - a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή - of Life, of our φύσις - occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion - of the need not to cause suffering - by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural - part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature - to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted - by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority - to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption - an act of ὕβρις - which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack."

---

## Appendix IV

### Preface from *One Perceivation*

Following suggestions from several readers of both my translations of and commentaries on eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum [1] and my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, [2] I have collected here several essays of mine, published between 2012 and 2019, concerning my methodology in regard to translating and employing certain Ancient Greek words.

Hopefully this collection will go some way toward revealing to readers the reasoning behind why I, for example, use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη and attribute to that Greek word a particular philosophical meaning - "a fair and balanced personal, individual, judgement" (that is, thoughtful reasoning, or wisdom) - rather than the English meaning now associated with the transliteration sophrosyne which is "soundness of mind, moderation", thus avoiding the English word "mind" with all its post-classical and modern interpretations philosophical and otherwise.

Another example is pathei mathos - πάθει μάθος - which is used not in accord with Greek grammatical (inflective) usage, but in accord with the English language use of an expression, with my writings thus employing expressions such as "a pathei-mathos", "that pathei-mathos", "which pathei-mathos", "our accumulated pathei-mathos", "my pathei-mathos", and of course "the philosophy of pathei-mathos".

A further example is σοφόν in preference to σοφός, when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of those denotata: which is the quiddity, the physis, with the denotata (σοφός: skill, learning, wisdom) a presencing [3] in an individual of that wordless quiddity, [4] that physis. [5]

In these and other instances the words are used in an Anglicized, non-inflective, way to suggest a specific philosophical term or concept different from what the original Greek does or might suggest, ancient or modern, as in the matter of σωφρονέω/σωφροσύνη. That is, they are intended to be assimilated into the English language either in their transliterated form (for instance sophronein) or in their Greek form (for instance σωφρονεῖν) and refer not to some supra-personal "idea" or ideation - ἰδέα/εἶδος - or abstraction but rather to individuals.

I attempted to explain the philosophical principles behind my methodology and weltanschauung in my book *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, and in my two monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* [6] and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. [7] Which principles are (i) emphasising the individual, the personal, the unique and empathic nature of perceivation - of apprehending and understanding Being and beings, and our own physis - over and above abstractions and ideations and thus over and above denotata



- and (ii) that the classical principles or virtues of τὸ καλόν, ἀρετή, and τὸ ἀγαθὸν related to and were defined by the deeds, the lives, of individuals and not to something supra-personal such as some idea or ideation or dogma or faith or ideology, and were well-expressed in the term καλὸς κάγαθός, which implies those who conduct themselves in a certain manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - a particular personal character. But as I noted in one of the essays included here: does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make my philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps.

However, in regard to translations such as tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum and the Gospel of John, when I have used an original phrase - for example "quidditas of semblance" in the Poemandres tractate, and, in the Gospel of John, translated οὐρανός as Empyrean rather than the conventional Heaven, to give just two examples from the many - I have explained my interpretation in the associated commentary.

For reasons which the essays included here may make clear, I have [in the *One Perceiviation* compilation] added a slightly revised version of my *Glossary of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos: Vocabulary, Definitions, and Explanations*, and also the Introduction to my translation of and commentary on chapters I-V of the Gospel of John. [8]

David Myatt  
2020  
Second Edition

Source: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/rejecting-extremism/one-perceiviation/>

[1] *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. 2017, 978-1976452369

[2] *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*. 978-1484096642

[3] Presencing: from the classical Latin praesentia - meaning "having or implying actual presence", as manifesting (as being presenced) in a locality or an individual. Qv. my commentary on ἱερός Λόγος 2, et sequentia, of the Corpus Hermeticum.

[4] The scholastic term quiddity derives from the 11th/12th century post-classical Latin quidditas, and avoids using the term "essence" (οὐσία) which has post-classical and modern connotations. As I noted in my commentary on tractate XI:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum,

In respect of οὐσία, qv. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015a: ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἢ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἢ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως

τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

See also my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/aristotle-metaphysics-1015α/>

[5] In respect of physis, refer to my essay *The Concept Of Physis*,

[6] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. 978-1979599023

[7] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*. 2017. 978-1982010935

[8] The translation of and commentary is available at <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/gospel-according-to-john/>

---

## Appendix VI

### Physis And Being

#### An Introduction To The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

The philosophy of pathei-mathos is based on four axioms: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis [1] and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is denotatum [2] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom [3] - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that denotatum and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth.

For, as mentioned in a previous essay,

"empathy and pathei-mathos incline us to suggest that ipseity is an

illusion of perspective: that there is, fundamentally, no division between 'us' - as some individual sentient, mortal being - and what has hitherto been understood and named as the Unity, The One, God, The Eternal. That 'we' are not 'observers' but rather Being existing as Being exists and is presented in the Cosmos. That thus all our striving, individually and collectively when based on some ideal or on some form - some abstraction and what is derived therefrom, such as ideology and dogma - always is or becomes sad/tragic, and which recurrence of sadness/tragedy, generation following generation, is perhaps even inevitable unless and until we live according to the wordless knowing that empathy and pathei-mathos reveal." [4]

In essence, empathy and pathei-mathos lead us away from the abstractions we have constructed and manufactured and which abstractions we often tend to impose, or project, upon other human beings, upon ourselves, often in the belief that such abstractions can aid our understanding of others and of ourselves, with a feature of all abstractions being inclusion and exclusion; that is, certain individuals are considered as belonging to or as defined by a particular category while others are not.

Over millennia we have manufactured certain abstractions and their assumed opposites and classified many of them according to particular moral standards so that a particular abstraction is considered good and/or beneficial and/or as necessary and/or as healthy, while its assumed dialectical opposite is considered bad (or evil), or unnecessary, or unhealthy, and/or as unwarranted.

Thus in ancient Greece and Rome slavery was accepted by the majority, and considered by the ruling elite as natural and necessary, with human beings assigned to or included in the category 'slave' a commodity who could be traded with slaves regarded as necessary to the functioning of society. Over centuries, with the evolution of religions such as Christianity and with the development in Western societies of humanist weltanschauungen, the moral values of this particular abstraction, this particular category to which certain human beings assigned, changed such that for perhaps a majority slavery came to be regarded as morally repugnant. Similarly in respect of the abstraction designated in modern times by such terms as "the rôle of women in society" which rôle for millennia in the West was defined according to various masculous criteria - deriving from a ruling and an accepted patriarchy - but which rôle in the past century in Western societies has gradually been redefined.

Yet irrespective of such developments, such changes associated with certain abstractions, the abstractions themselves and the dialectic of moral opposites associated with them remain because, for perhaps a majority, abstractions and ipseity, as a criteria of judgment and/or as a human instinct, remain; as evident in the continuing violence against, the killing of, and the manipulation, of women by men, and in what has become described by terms such as "modern slavery" and "human trafficking".

In addition, we human beings have continued to manufacture abstractions and continue to assign individuals to them, a useful example being the abstraction denoted by the terms The State and The Nation-State [5] and which abstraction, with its government, its supra-personal authority, its laws, its economy, and its inclusion/exclusion (citizenship or lack of it) has come to dominate and influence the life of the majority of people in the West.

Ontologically, abstractions - ancient and modern - usurp our connexion to Being and to other living beings so that instead of using wordless empathy and *pathei-mathos* as a guide to Reality [6] we tend to define ourselves or are defined by others according to an abstraction or according to various abstractions. In the matter of the abstraction that is The State there is a tendency to define or to try to understand our relation to Reality by for example whether we belong, are a citizen of a particular State; by whether or not we have an acceptable standard of living because of the opportunities and employment and/or the assistance afforded by the economy and the policies of the State; by whether or not we agree or disagree with the policies of the government in power, and often by whether or not we have transgressed some State-made law or laws. Similarly, in the matter of belief in a revealed religion such as Christianity or Islam we tend to define or understand our relation to Reality by means of such an abstraction: that is, according to the revelation (or a particular interpretation of it) and its eschatology, and thus by how the promise of Heaven/Jannah may be personally obtained.

Empathy and *pathei-mathos*, however, wordlessly - sans denotatum, sans abstractions, sans a dialectic of contradictory opposites - uncover *physis*: our *physis*, that of other mortals, that of other living beings, and that of Being/Reality itself. Which *physis*, howsoever presented - in ourselves, in other living beings, in Being - is fluxive, a balance between the being that it now is, that it was, and that it has the inherent (the *acausal*) quality to be. [7]

This uncovering, such a revealing, is of a knowing beyond ipseity and thus beyond the separation-of-otherness which denotatum, abstractions, and a dialectic of opposites manufacture and presence. A knowing of ourselves as an affective connexion [8] to other living beings and to Being itself, with Being revealed as fluxive (as a *meson* - μέσον [9] - with the potentiality to change, to develop) and thus which (i) is not - as in the theology of revealed religions such as Christianity and Islam - a God who is Eternal, Unchanging, Omnipotent [10], and (ii) is affected or can be affected (in terms of *physis*) by what we do or do not do.

This awareness, this knowing, of such an affective connexion - our past, our current, our potentiality, to adversely affect, to have adversely affected, to cause, to having caused, suffering or harm to other living beings - also inclines us or can incline us toward benignity and humility, and thus incline us to live in a non-suffering causing way, appreciate of our thousands of years old culture of *pathei-mathos*. [11]

In terms of understanding Being and the divine, it inclines us or can incline us, as sentient beings, to apprehend Being as not only presenced in us but as capable of changing - unfolding, evolving - in a manner dependant on our physis and on how our physis is presenced by us, and by others, in the future. Which seems to imply a new ontology and one distinct from past and current theologies with their anthropomorphic θεός (god) and θεοὶ (gods).

An ontology of physis: of mortals, of livings beings, and of Being, as fluxive mesons. Of we mortals as a mortal microcosm of Being - the cosmic order, the κόσμος - itself [12] with the balance, the meson, that empathy and pathei-mathos incline us toward living presenced in the ancient Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός,

"which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character." [13]

Which personal conduct, in the modern world, might suggest a Ciceronian-inspired but new type of *civitas*, and one

"not based on some abstractive law but on a spiritual and interior (and thus not political) understanding and appreciation of our own Ancestral Culture and that of others; on our 'civic' duty to personally presence καλὸς κάγαθός and thus to act and to live in a noble way. For the virtues of personal honour and manners, with their responsibilities, presence the fairness, the avoidance of hubris, the natural harmonious balance, the gender equality, the awareness and appreciation of the divine, that is the numinous." [14]

With καλὸς κάγαθός, such personal conduct, and such a new *civitas*, summarising how the philosophy of pathei-mathos might, in one way, be presenced in a practical manner in the world.

David Myatt  
2019

This essay is a revised and edited version of a reply sent to an academic who enquired about the philosophy of pathei-mathos

οοοοο

#### Notes

[1] I use the term physis - φύσις - ontologically, in the Aristotelian sense, to refer to the 'natural' and the fluxive being (nature) of a being, which nature is often manifest, in we mortals, in our character (persona) and in our deeds. Qv. my essay *Towards Understanding Physis* (2015) and my translation of and commentary on the Poemandres tractate in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates* (2017).

[2] As noted elsewhere, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin denotare - not only as meaning "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer to that which is so named or so denoted," but also as an Anglicized term implying, depending on context, singular or plural instances. As an Anglicized term there is generally no need to use the inflected plural *denotata*.

[3] In the context of the philosophy of pathei-mathos the term abstraction signifies a particular named and defined category or form (ἰδέα, εἶδος) and which category or form is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from some-thing, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing.

In respect of denotatum, in Kratylus 389d Plato has Socrates talk about 'true, ideal' naming (denotatum) - βλέποντα πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἔστιν ὄνομα, qv. my essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, 2015.

[4] *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[5] Contrary to modern convention I tend to write The State instead of "the state" because I consider The State/The Nation-State a particular abstraction; as an existent, an entity, which has been manufactured, by human beings, and which entity, like many such manufactured 'things', has been, in its design and function, changed and which can still be changed, and which has associated with it a presumption of a supra-personal (and often moral) authority.

In addition, written The State (or the State) it suggests some-thing which endures or which may endure beyond the limited lifespan of a mortal human being.

[6] 'Reality' in the philosophical sense of what (in terms of physis) is distinguished or distinguishable from what is apparent or external. In terms of ancient Hellenic and Western Renaissance mysticism the distinction is between the esoteric and the exoteric; between the physis of a being and some outer form (or appearance) including the outer form that is a useful tool or implement which can be used to craft or to manufacture some-thing such as other categories/abstractions. With the important ontological proviso that what is esoteric is not the 'essence' of something - as for example Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος - but instead the physis of the being itself as explicated for instance by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσά πως ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ

Given the foregoing, then principally - and to be exact - physis denotes the quidditas of beings having change inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changes predicated on it. For physis is inherent change either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is.

That is, as I noted in my essay *Towards Understanding Physis*, it is a meson (μέσον) balanced between the being that-it-was and the being it has the potentiality to unfold to become.

In respect of "what is real" - τῶν ὄντων - cf. the Poemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum and especially section 3,

φημι ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν

I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos [qv. *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017]

[7] Qv. *Towards Understanding Physis*, 2015.

[8] I use term *affective* here, and in other writings, to mean "having the quality of affecting; tending to affect or influence."

[9] Qv. footnote [6]. In terms of ontology a meson is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be.

[10] This understanding of Being as fluxive - as a change - was prefigured in the mythos of Ancient Greece with the supreme deity - the chief of the gods - capable of being overthrown and replaced, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[11] As explained in my 2014 essay *Education And The Culture of Pathei-Mathos*, the term describes "the accumulated pathei-mathos of individuals, world-wide, over thousands of years, as (i) described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts; as (ii) have inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama; as (iii) expressed via non-verbal mediums such as music and Art, and as (iv) manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' such as films and documentaries."

This culture remembers the suffering and the beauty and the killing and the hubris and the love and the compassion that we mortals have presented and caused over millennia, and which culture

"thus includes not only traditional accounts of, or accounts inspired by, personal pathei-mathos, old and modern - such as the *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, and the

poetry of people as diverse as Sappho and Sylvia Plath - but also works or art-forms inspired by such *pathei-mathos*, whether personal or otherwise, and whether factually presented or fictionalized. Hence films such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Etz Limon* may poignantly express something about our φύσις as human beings and thus form part of the culture of *pathei-mathos*."

[12] κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, "a cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings." Tractate IV:2, Corpus Hermeticum.

Cf. Marsilii Ficini, *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, XXVI, published in 1489 CE,

Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona.

How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned.

Which is a philosophical restatement of the phrase "quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius" (what is above is as what is below) from the Latin version, published in 1541 CE, of the medieval Hermetic text known as *Tabula Smaragdina*.

[13] The quotation is from my *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, 2017.

[14] The quotation is from my *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*, 2017.

---

## Appendix V

### Appreciating Classical Literature

Having read and once been in possession of a few of the printed published volumes of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* [1] I seem to at last understand how that continuing scholarly endeavour, begun decades before the First World War, is emblematic of the importance of academic scholarship, and emblematic of the temporal nature of wars and especially of such national and regional conflicts as we have endured, and continue to be involved in, during the past one hundred and fifty years.

Wars, and conflicts, with their human suffering and their often civilian deaths which an appreciation of classical (Ancient Greek and Latin) literature can place into a necessary supra-personal and supra-national perspective.

For the *pathei-mathos* which such literature - and often the associated



mythoi – can impart is of our hubris and our need for the wisdom enshrined in the phrase καλὸς κἀγαθός. That is, in the melding of τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) and τὸ ἀγαθόν (the honourable) as in tractate XI:3 of the Corpus Hermeticum:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἔστι;  
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.

But the Sophia of the theos is what?  
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion. [2]

Where, however, τὸ καλόν refers, in terms of individuals, to not only physical beauty – the beautiful – but also to a particular demeanour indicative of a well-balanced, noble, personal character, as for example mentioned by Xenophon in *Hellenica*, Book V, 3.9,

πολλοὶ δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ τῶν περιοίκων ἐθελονταὶ καλοὶ κἀγαθοὶ  
ἠκολούθουν, καὶ ξένοι τῶν τροφίμων καλουμένων, καὶ νόθοι τῶν  
Σπαρτιατῶν, μάλα εὐειδεῖς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει καλῶν οὐκ  
ἄπειροι

A personal character which Marcus Tullius Cicero also explained, in his *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum*,

Honestum igitur id intellegimus, quod tale est, ut detracta omni utilitate sine ullis praemiis fructibusve per se ipsum possit iure laudari. quod quale sit, non tam definitione, qua sum usus, intellegi potest, quamquam aliquantum potest, quam communi omnium iudicio et optimi cuiusque studiis atque factis, qui permulta ob eam unam causam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honestum est, etsi nullum consecuturum emolumentum vident. (II, 45f)

I am inclined to believe that it is unfortunate that the societies of the modern West no longer consider “a classical education” – the learning of Ancient Greek and Latin, and a study of Ancient Greek and Latin texts such as those of Cicero, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Aristotle – a necessity, as a way to wisdom, as a means to understanding our human physis.

That some individuals, such as the scholars engaged in endeavouring to complete *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, do still appreciate Ancient Greek and Latin texts provides this old man, in the twilight of his life, some comfort, some hope for our human future.

ἄθᾶνατοι θνητοί, θνητοὶ ἄθᾶνατοι, ζῶντες τὸν ἐκείνων θάνατον,  
τὸν δὲ ἐκείνων βίον τεθνεῶτες

The deathless are deathful, the deathful deathless, with one living the other's dying with the other dying in that other's life. [3]

David Myatt  
December 2019

[1] <https://www.thesaurus.badw.de/en/tll-digital/tll-open-access.html>

[2] As I have mentioned in several essays, and in my *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates: Translation and Commentary*, the theos – ὁ θεὸς – is the chief classical deity (such as Zeus in Ancient Greek mythoi) and should not be understood as equivalent to the monotheistic creator God of Christianity and of the ancient Hebrews. For ὁ θεὸς is not omnipotent, and can be overthrown, as Zeus overthrew Kronos and as Kronos himself overthrew his own father.

[3] Heraclitus, Fragment 62, Diels-Krantz.

ooo

All translations by DWM

---

## Appendix VII

### The Concept of Physis

#### Towards Understanding Physis

Since the concept of physis - φύσις - is central to my philosophy of patheimathos, it seems apposite to offer a more detailed explanation of the concept, and my usage of it, than I have hitherto given, deriving as the term does from Ancient Greece and used as it is by Heraclitus, Aristotle, and others, and occurring as it does in texts such as the Poemandres and ἱερός Λόγος tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum.

As I mentioned in my translation of Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1015α [1] - and elsewhere - physis is usually translated as either 'Nature' (as if 'the natural world', and the physical cosmos beyond, are meant) or as the character (the nature) of a person. However, while the context - of the original Greek text - may suggest (as often, for example, in Homer and Herodotus) such a meaning as such English words impute, physis philosophically (as, for example, in Heraclitus and Aristotle and the *Corpus Hermeticum*) has specific ontological meanings. Meanings which are lost, or glossed over, when physis is simply translated either as 'Nature' or - in terms of mortals - as (personal) character.

Ontologically, as Aristotle makes clear [2], physis denotes the being of those beings who or which have the potentiality (the being) to change, be changed, or to develop. That is, to become, or to move or be moved; as for example in the motion (of 'things') and the 'natural unfolding' or growth, sans an external cause, that living beings demonstrate.

However, and crucially, physis is not - for human beings - some abstract 'essence' (qv. Plato's ἰδέα/εἶδος) but rather a balance between the being that it is, it was, and potentially might yet be. That is, in Aristotelian terms, it is a meson - μέσον - of being and 'not being'; and 'not being' in the sense of not yet having become what it could be, and not now being what it used to be. Hence why, for Aristotle, a manifestation of physis - in terms of the being of mortals - such as arête (ἀρετή) is a meson, a balance of things, and not, as it is for Plato, some fixed 'form' - some idea, ideal - which as Plato wrote "always exists, and has no genesis. It does not die, does not grow, does not decay." [3]

According to my understanding of Heraclitus, physis also suggests - as in Fragment 1 - the 'natural' being of a being which we mortals have a tendency to cover-up or conceal [4].

Furthermore, physis is one of the main themes in the Pōemandres tractate of the Corpus Hermeticum, for the author seeks "to apprehend the physis of beings" [5] with physis often mystically personified:

"This is a mysterium esoteric even to this day. For Physis, having intimately joined with the human, produced a most wondrous wonder possessed of the physis of the harmonious seven I mentioned before, of Fire and pneuma. Physis did not tarry, giving birth to seven male-and-female humans with the physis of those viziers, and ætherean...

[For] those seven came into being in this way. Earth was muliebral, Water was lustful, and Fire maturing. From Æther, the pneuma, and with Physis bringing forth human-shaped bodies. Of Life and phaos, the human came to be of psyche and perceivation; from Life - psyche; from phaos - perceivation; and with everything in the observable cosmic order cyclic until its completion...

When the cycle was fulfilled, the connexions between all things were, by the deliberations of theos, unfastened. Living beings - all male-and-female then - were, including humans, rent asunder thus bringing into being portions that were masculous with the others muliebral." [6]

Physis is also personified in the Ἱερός Λόγος tractate:

"The divine is all of that mision: renewance of the cosmic order through Physis For Physis is presented in the divine." [7]

### **The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos**

As mentioned elsewhere, what I have termed the philosophy of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) is just my weltanschauung, developed between 2011 and 2013 after I had, upon reflexion, rejected much of and revised what then remained of my earlier (2006-2011) 'numinous way' [8].

In the philosophy of pathei-mathos, physis is used contextually to refer to:

- (i) the ontology of beings, an ontology - a reality, a 'true nature' - that is often obscured by denotatum [9] and by abstractions [10], both of which conceal physis;
- (ii) the relationship between beings, and between beings and Being, which is of us - we mortals - as a nexion, an affective effluvium (or emanation) of Life (ψυχή) and thus of why 'the separation-of-otherness' [11] is a concealment of that relationship;
- (iii) the character, or persona, of human beings, and which character - sans denotatum - can be discovered (revealed, known) by the faculty of empathy;
- (iv) the unity - the being - beyond the division of our physis, as individual mortals, into masculous and muliebral;
- (v) that manifestation denoted by the concept Time, with Time considered to be an expression/manifestation of the physis of beings [12].

My concept of physis is therefore primarily ontological and rooted - as is my philosophy of pathei-mathos - in the pagan culture of classical, and Hellenic, Greece.

David Myatt  
March 2015

### Notes

[1] I have appended to this essay my translation of, and notes on, the relevant part of 1015α.

[2] See my *Some Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics, Book 5, 1015α*, included in <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/pre-socratic-and-aristotle.pdf>, and also my *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*.

[3] πρῶτον μὲν αἰὲν ὄν καὶ οὔτε γιγνόμενον οὔτε ἀπολλύμενον οὔτε αὐξανόμενον οὔτε φθίνον (Symposium 210e - 211a).

[4] See *Some Notes on Heraclitus Fragment 1*, in <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/pre-socratic-and-aristotle.pdf>

[5] *Poemandres 3*; qv. my *Mercvrii Trismegisti Pymander de potestate et sapientia dei: A Translation and Commentary*, 2013.

[6] *Poemandres 16-18*.

[7] *Ἱερός Λόγος 3*; qv. my *Ἱερός Λόγος: An Esoteric Mythos. A Translation Of And A Commentary On The Third Tractate Of The Corpus Hermeticum*,

included in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017, 978-1976452369

[8] Refer to my *Concerning The Development Of The Numinous Way*, 2012.

[9] In my philosophy of pathei-mathos, I use the term denotatum - from the Latin, denotare - in accord with its general meaning which is "to denote or to describe by an expression or a word; to name some-thing; to refer that which is so named or so denoted."

[10] An abstraction is a manufactured generalization, a hypothesis, a posited thing, an assumption or assumptions about, an extrapolation of or from something, or some assumed or extrapolated ideal 'form' of some-thing. Sometimes, abstractions are generalization based on some sample(s), or on some median (average) value or sets of values, observed, sampled, or assumed.

Abstractions can be of some-thing past, in the present, or described as a goal or an ideal which it is assumed could be attained or achieved in the future. Abstractions are often assumed to provide some 'knowledge' or some 'understanding' of some-thing assigned to or described by a particular abstraction.

[11] Refer, for example, to my *The Error of The-Separation-of-Otherness in The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018.

[12] *Time And The Separation Of Otherness - Part One*. 2012.

---

cc JR Wright, R. Parker, & DW Myatt 2021  
(Third Edition)

This text is issued under the Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-ND 4.0) license  
and can be freely copied and distributed under the terms of that license

---

## Preface

Between March 2022 and July 2024 the modern heretic David Myatt gave seven interviews. Together these primary sources provide a reasonably detailed understanding of Myatt himself; of his individualistic and apolitical post-2011 philosophy of pathei-mathos; of his peregrinations as a political and religious extremist; and why he rejected extremism.

The Introduction, *An Anti-Establishment Heretic*, explains why he is considered a modern heretic.

- \* Introduction
- \* Some Questions for David Myatt, July 2024
- \* An Interview On A Summer Solstice Eve, 2024
- \* A May Day Interview, 2024
- \* An Uncertitude Of Knowing: Four Interviews, March 2022-March 2023
- \* Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos

The *An Uncertitude Of Knowing: Four Interviews* also includes the June 2022 text *Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* which provides an overview of his philosophy, and Myatt's 2012 text *Analysing National Socialism* where he explains why his post-2011 philosophy is contrary to and incompatible with National Socialism.

The text *Developing The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos: Impersonal Abstractions, The Modern World, And The Axioms Of Empathy And Pathei-Mathos* is by Myatt, published in 2024, in which he writes that

"my contention is that my personal 'numinous way of pathei-mathos', or at least the foundations of that Way, which are personal empathy and pathei-mathos, could possibly be the basis for other individuals to develop their own numinous weltanschauung free from the influence of the manufactured impersonal causal abstractions that shaped the ancient world, some of which still influence the modern world, and the more recent impersonal causal abstractions which since the Second World War are prevalent and now authoritative in the modern world because supported by many if not most governments and Institutions in the Western world, and often now used by governments as the basis for criminal laws."

---



## Introduction An Anti-Establishment Heretic

### Antinomianism

Antinomian, as used here, implies a passive rejection of the customs, the beliefs, the authority of the modern nation-State with its *idées fixes* which include the idea that the nation-State through its government, its institutions, and its laws is the ultimate authority and judge of what is 'right' and 'wrong', not the judgment of the individual, and which supra-personal authority can and should be enforced by the nation-State through a police force or a law-enforcement agency, through the Courts, and if necessary through its armed forces all of which operate through a hierarchical chain-of-command. This antinomianism is expressed, for example, by those who seek places where they or their family can live 'off-grid' or in a rural location; by those those who withdraw from society to live a more spiritual way of life; and in general by those who seek to live in a more harmonious way with Nature.

Myatt's antinomianism is expressed: (i) by his philosophy of pathei-mathos which in many ways is revolutionary with its individualism, its emphasis on empathy and personal honour, and its dissection of the causal abstractions, the denotata, and which abstractions {1} not only inform and now motivate the governments of the modern West but also, because of their embedded dialectic of opposites, perpetuate the cycle of suffering; {2} (ii) by what is arguably the new paganism that can be developed from Myatt's works; {3} and (iii) by his renaissance of the roots of Western culture which are Greco-Roman, Hellenistic, paganism and not the Hebraistic culture - based around the Old and New Testaments - which formed the basis for the Christianity that for over a thousand years dominated Western culture.

David Myatt's antinomian reputation, currently for a few and possibly in the future for a rational and scholarly minority, is in his philosophy of pathei-mathos; {4} in prose such as, to give just two examples, *One Tree Among Many* {5} and *Memories Of Manual Labour* {6}; in works such as *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, and *Tua Est Diaboli Ianua*; {7} and in his translations of and extensive commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum. {8}

### Overview

Myatt's philosophy, based as it is on empathy and personal honour, leads us away from the Judeo-Christian illusion of causal abstractions (a naming) and a dialectic of opposites based on such naming with the inevitable apocalyptic eschatology; with his philosophy presenting a modern and rational paganism based on Greco-Roman values.

His *Good, Evil, Honour, and God*, his 29 page monograph included in his book *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* {9} is a relevant example of his writings about his philosophy of pathei-mathos, and in which monograph he compares the ontologies of Christianity, Islam, and the modern nation-state with the ontology he proposes for his own philosophy.

For example, after discussing the ontologies of Christianity, Islam, and the modern nation-state, he presents in Parts Four and Five his argument in favour of a personal ontology deriving from pathei mathos, as well as presenting his conclusions regarding the need to lead a tolerant, compassionate, honourable, way of life.

Thus in Part Four he writes that the aim is:

"to be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei.

This, by its nature, is a personal answer and a personal choice; an alternative way that compliments and is respectful of other answers, other choices, and of other ways of dealing with issues such as the suffering that afflicts others, the harm that humans do so often inflict and have for so long inflicted upon others [...]

[There is] no need for dogma or too many words; no need for comparisons; no 'just cause' to excuse our behaviour. No mechanisms and no techniques to enable us to progress toward some-thing because there is no need or requirement to progress toward what is not there to be attained. There is only a personal living in such a way that we try to be compassionate, empathic, loving, honourable, kind, tolerant, gentle, and humble. And this is essentially the wisdom, the insight, the way of living – sans denotatum – that thousands upon thousands of people over millennia have contributed to the culture of pathei-mathos, as well as the essence of the message which many if not all spiritual ways and religions, in their genesis, perhaps sought to reveal: the message of the health of love and of our need, as fallible beings often inclined toward the unbalance of hubris, for humility." {9}

Interestingly, and in reference to Christianity, in his *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* he writes that what he has found when translating the Gospel of John

"is rather reminiscent of what individuals such as Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn wrote and

said about Jesus and the spiritual way that the Gospels in particular revealed.

This is the way of humility, of forgiveness, of love, of a personal appreciation of the divine, of the numinous; and a spiritual, interior, way somewhat different from supra-personal moralistic interpretations based on inflexible notions of 'sin' and thus on what is considered 'good' and what is considered 'evil'. A difference evident in many passages from the Gospel of John." {10}

In Part Five of *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* he explains the origins of his philosophy:

"Twenty years ago, someone whom I loved who loved me died, too young and having harmed no one. Died, leaving me bereft, if only for a while. For too soon my return to those hubriatic, selfish, suffering-causing, and extremist, ways of my pasts. As if, despite the grief, the pain of loss, I personally had learned nothing, except in such moments of such remembering that did not, unfortunately, impact too much upon my practicalities of life; at least until another bereavement, thirteen years later, came to shock, shake, betake me far from my arrogant presumptions about myself, about life, to thus lead, to so slowly lead, to me on a clear cold day yet again interiorly dwelling on what, if anything, is our human purpose of being here and why such bereavements, such early deaths, just seem so unjust, unfair." {9}

Another relevant example is his *In Reply To Some Questions* (2012) in which he explains in greater detail the intent of his writings about extremism and about his philosophy of πάθει μάθος – the 'numinous way' – and that those writings

"have been written as expressions of my own feelings, experiences, and philosophical reflexions, with no particular audience in mind, save in many instance for a few personal friends. In effect, they document my interior struggles, my attempts to find solutions to certain philosophical problems, and my desire to understand the how and the why of my hubris, of my extremist decades, and thus to understand and acknowledge the mistakes of my past – to understand and acknowledge the suffering I caused – and understand the error of extremism itself [...]

What I hope to achieve by such writings is to communicate – or to attempt to communicate – some of my insights, some of my experiences, some of my solutions, and some of my conclusions, such as they are, and as personal and as fallible as they are, and dealing as they do with extremism, with an extremist life, and with the personal life of the hubriatic man I was [...]

My concern – and therefore that of the philosophy of πάθει μάθος – is with spiritual (numinous) and personal matters. With our own individual interior change and reformation; with the perspective and insight that empathy and pathei-mathos provide: which is of personal virtues such as compassion, love, humility, empathy, πάθει μάθος, honour, and wu-wei, and thus with treating human beings as individuals [...]

My writings over the past few years have been personal, 'mystical', and philosophical, with the latter documenting the development and refinement of my 'numinous way' culminating in my moral philosophy of pathei-mathos which is concerned with individuals and how individuals might discover and learn to appreciate ἁρμονίη and δίκη and so move toward wisdom. So, what I wanted – rather, what I felt compelled to do following a personal tragedy – was to try and understand myself, my suffering-causing past; to try and discover what undermined ἁρμονίη and δίκη, and what ὕβρις was and what it caused and why." {11}

#### **A Modern Pagan Philosophy**

One other reason why Myatt's mystical philosophy of pathei-mathos may be antinomian and unappreciated today is that his philosophy is, for many of those who have studied it, a modern pagan philosophy in the tradition of Greco-Roman philosophy.

In his 2019 autobiographical essay *An Indebtedness To Ancient Greek And Greco-Roman Culture* he explained that he uses some non-English terms mostly from Ancient Greek but occasionally from Latin,

"in the hope that such terms would not only be able to convey my meaning better than some easily misunderstood English term but also might be assimilated into the English language as philosophical terms either in their transliterated English form or in their Greek and Latin form.

Such terms might also reveal my indebtedness to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture and how and why the philosophy of pathei-mathos is both a transition from mythoi and anthropomorphic deities (theos and theoi) to an appreciation of the numinous sans denotatum and sans religion and thus a return to individual insight and understanding over impersonal abstractions/ideations, over denotatum, and over religious and political dogma, with the Latin denotatum – used as an Anglicized term and which thus can be used to describe both singular and plural instances of denoting and naming – a useful example of my somewhat idiosyncratic methodology.

Thus and for example I used and use σοφόν instead of σοφός when the sense implied is not the usual "skilled", or "learned" or "wise" but rather what lies beyond and what was/is the genesis of what is presenced in a person as skill, or learning, or wisdom. I used and use σωφρονεῖν in preference to σωφροσύνη (sophrosyne) to suggest a fair and balanced personal judgement rather than the fairly modern English interpretation of sophrosyne as soundness of mind, moderation." {12}

In that essay he asks then answers a rhetorical question about using such Greek and Anglicized terms:



"Does my idiosyncratic use of Ancient Greek and Latin terms make this philosophy confusing, difficult to understand and difficult to appreciate? Perhaps. But since philosophia – φιλοσοφία – is, at least according to my fallible understanding, becoming a friend of σοφόν, and since such a personal friendship involves seeking to understand Being, beings, and Time, and since part of the ethos of the culture of the West – heir to Ancient Greek and Greco-Roman culture – is or at least was a personal and rational quest for understanding and knowledge, then perhaps some effort, as befits those of noble physis who appreciate and who may seek to presence καλὸς κάγαθός, is only to be expected."

In his 2017 monograph *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* he explains the context and meaning of the term καλὸς κάγαθός, writing that

"we are, ontologically, emanations of and presence Being, and are a connexion to the cosmos – to other presencings of Being – through, in terms of epistemology, not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετὴ, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess arête, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning – nobility of character. Which Greek phrase expresses the ethics, the high personal standards, of the ancient paganus weltanschauung we have been discussing." {13}

In his *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and in his other 2017 monograph *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {14} he writes of the difference between classical paganism and revealed religions such as Christianity. That there is, in his view, a fundamental

"difference between a religious apprehension of the numinous – based on received and venerated texts, on exegesis – and the paganus apprehension of the numinous as manifest in Greco-Roman culture, based as it is on an individual, and an intuitive, empathic and thus wordless, apprehension of the numinous." {15}

This "empathic apprehension of the numinous" is at the core of Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos. In his *Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* he writes that empathy is a means by which we can

"understand both φύσις and Πόλεμος, and thus apprehend Being as Being, and the nature of beings – and in particular the nature of our being, as mortals. For empathy reveals to us the acausality of Being and thus how the process of abstraction, involving as it does an imposition of causality and separation upon beings (and the ideation) implicit on opposites and dialectic, is a covering-up of Being." {16}

In *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, he writes that

"Greco-Roman culture is inextricably bound to the culture of the West and formed the basis for the European Renaissance that emerged in the 14th century, one aspect of which was a widespread appreciation of classical Art, of classical literature, and of texts such as the Corpus Hermeticum."

Which why his translations of eight tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum, and of other Greek texts,

"when studied together enable us to appreciate and understand the classical, pagan, ethos and thence the ethos of the West itself [...] What Myatt does in his translations [of the Corpus Hermeticum] is paint a picture of classical – and of Hellenic – culture and especially of Hellenic mysticism; a culture and a mysticism which is pagan and based on individuals, on tangible things such as honesty, and not on moralistic and religious and impersonal abstractions. That is, he reveals the Greco-Roman ethos – the pagan ethos – underlying the hermetic texts and which is in contrast to that of Christianity with its later, medieval and Puritanical, impersonal moralizing." {17}

Which understanding of the ethos of the West, sans Christianity, the politically orientated individuals and organizations who are vociferous critics of Myatt most probably view as heresy, as evidence that Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos undermines the Judeo-Christian culture and tradition that still forms the basis of many Western nation-states, and evidence also of how Myatt's philosophy may aid those who champion a particular and pagan interpretation of Western culture.

As one commentator noted, Western culture is

"exemplified according to Myatt by καλὸς κάγαθός. That is, by those who "conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest – because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning – nobility of character," {17}

and which nobility of character is manifest in "the virtues of personal honour and manners." {18} As Myatt noted in his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God*,

"My own and only fallible answer to the question of how to deal with the suffering that blights this world therefore seems to be the answer of a personal honour. That is, for each of us to gently try to carry that necessary harmony, that balance, of δίκη, wordlessly within; to thus restrain ourselves from causing harm while being able, prepared, in the immediacy of the moment, to personally, physically, restrain – prevent – others when we chance upon such harm being done. This, to me, is Life in its wholesome natural fullness – as

lived, presenced, by the brief, mortal, consciously aware, emanations we are; mortal emanations capable of restraint, reason, culture, and reforming change; of learning from our pathei-mathos and that of others. My personal answer to personal questions, perplexion, and to grief and doubt. The answer which is to live in hope – even need – of a personal loyal love; to live with empathy, gentleness, humility, compassion, and yet with strength enough to do what should be done when, within the purvue of our personal space, we meet with one or many causing suffering and harm, no thought then for the fragility of our own mortal life or even for personal consequences beyond the ἁρμονίη we, in such honourable moments, are." {9}

In an essay written in September 2014 he explained that

"personal honour – which presences the virtues of fairness, tolerance, compassion, humility, and εὐταξία – [is] (i) a natural intuitive (wordless) expression of the numinous ('the good', δίκη, συμπάθεια) and (ii) of both what the culture of pathei-mathos and the acausal-knowing of empathy reveal we should do (or incline us toward doing) in the immediacy of the personal moment when personally confronted by what is unfair, unjust, and extreme.

Of how such honour – by its and our φύσις – is and can only ever be personal, and thus cannot be extracted out from the 'living moment' and our participation in the moment." {19}

According to Myatt's philosophy, empathy and personal honour {20} replace the Judeo-Christian illusion of causal abstractions (a naming) and a dialectic of opposites based on such naming with the inevitable apocalyptic eschatology which engenders a real-world struggle or a war between a posited and a supra-personal, abstract, 'good' and 'evil'.

Myatt's philosophy leads us away from such abstractions, back toward the pagan insight of Greeks such as Heraclitus:

"Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done." {21}

In chapter three of his *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos* Myatt provides not only the Greek text of two other fragments by or attributed to Heraclitus but also his own translations:

"Polemos our genesis, governing us all to bring forth some gods, some mortal beings with some unfettered yet others kept bound." Fragment 53

"All by genesis is appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] with beings bound together again by enantiodromia." Diogenes Laërtius, ix. 7.

In that chapter he writes that

"Empathy also reveals why the assumption that abstracted, ideated, opposites apply to or should apply to living beings – and that they thus can supply us with knowledge and understanding of living being – disrupts the natural balance, resulting in a loss of ἁρμονίη [harmony] and συμπάθεια and is therefore a manifestation of the error of ὕβρις."

In place of such abstracted, ideated, Judeo-Christian conflicting opposites there is in both Greco-Roman paganism, and in Myatt's philosophy, Summum Bonum. As Myatt notes in his *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, quoting the Roman philosopher Seneca,

"What is injurious to such a [pagan] harmonious balance is what is dishonourable, with τὸ ἀγαθὸν – Summum Bonum – thus understood as honestum, as what is honourable, noble: summum bonum est quod honestum est; et quod magis admireris: unum bonum est, quod honestum est, cetera falsa et adulterina bona sunt. Seneca, Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales, LXXI, 4.

the greatest good is that which is honourable. Also – and you may wonder at this – only that which is honourable is good, with all other 'goods' simply false and deceitful.

For honestum is how hubris can be avoided and balance maintained, and is the essence of καλὸς κάγαθός which presences the numinous, the divine, in and among mortals." {14}

This rational pagan understanding is worlds away from the abstractions that dominate the modern nation-state and marks him as a modern heretic.

Rufus Malisius  
2024  
v.1.03

ooo

{1} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2024/08/04/developing-the-numinous-way-of-pathei-mathos/>

{2} qv. Myatt's *Reflections On Conflict And Suffering*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/conflict-and-suffering-dwmyatt.pdf>

{3} Refer to *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-and-paganism-v3b/myatt-and-paganism-v3b.pdf>

{4} For an overview of Myatt's philosophy, see <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

{5} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2023/06/06/one-tree-among-many/>

{6} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/dwm-memories-manual-labour.pdf>

{7} (a) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf> (b) *Tua Est Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{8} *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, (a) Gratis pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf> (b) Printed version: ISBN 978-1976452369

{9} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

{10} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/>

His translation of and extensive commentary on chapters 1-5 of the Gospel of John is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/gospel-john-chapters1-5.pdf>

{11} In Reply To Some Questions (2012), <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/questions-for-dwm-2012/>

{12} <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2019/04/23/an-indebtedness-to-ancient-greek-and-greco-roman-culture/>

{13} *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf>

{14} *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{15} *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, op.cit.

{16} <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/numinous-way-pathe-mathos-v7.pdf>

{17} *Western Paganism And Hermeticism: Myatt And The Renaissance of Western Culture*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/myatt-paganism.pdf>

Myatt's translation of and commentary on tracts from the *Corpus Hermeticum* is available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{18} See, for example the chapter *Honour In The Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* in *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, op.cit.

{19} *The Way Of Pathei-Mathos – A Précis*. The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods: Some Personal and Metaphysical Musings*. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf>

{20} In regard to the European – the Western – tradition of personal honour see, for example, William Segar, *Booke of Honor & Armes*, published in 1590. The book is available at [https://books.google.com/books?id=LII\\_AQAAMAAJ](https://books.google.com/books?id=LII_AQAAMAAJ)

{21} The translation of fragment 1 is by Myatt who in his *Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God* provides the Greek text:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰὲ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εὐκασί, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὐδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται

## Some Questions for David Myatt

July 2024

T.C.D.

≡ ≡ ≡

*What is the ethos of the Martial Art of Physis, what was the idea behind it and do you still view it as an applicable practice?*

The ethos was implied in the term physis (φύσις) which I then understood not simply as the conventional English translations of 'Nature, or as the 'nature' or 'character' of a person, but rather in the Aristotelian sense of a 'meson' (μέσον) which is the balance, the median, existing between the being which-was and the being which-can-be, as in my later translation of his Metaphysics 9.1051a,

ἐκ δὴ τῶν εἰρημένων ἡ πρώτη φύσις καὶ κυρίως λεγομένη ἐστὶν ἡ οὐσία ἡ τῶν ἐχόντων ἀρχὴν κινήσεως ἐν αὐτοῖς ἢ αὐτά: ἡ γὰρ ὕλη τῷ ταύτης δεκτικῇ εἶναι λέγεται φύσις, καὶ αἱ γενέσεις καὶ τὸ φύεσθαι τῷ ἀπὸ ταύτης εἶναι κινήσεις. καὶ ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως τῶν φύσει ὄντων αὕτη ἐστίν, ἐνυπάρχουσα πῶς ἢ δυνάμει ἢ ἐντελεχείᾳ.

"Given the foregoing, then principally – and to be exact – physis denotes the quidditas of beings having changement inherent within them; for substantia has been denoted by physis because it embodies this, as have the becoming that is a coming-into-being, and a burgeoning, because they are changements predicated on it. For physis is inherent changement either manifesting the potentiality of a being or as what a being, complete of itself, is." <sup>1</sup>

That style of defence, for it was a style rather than an Art, was only demonstrated, rather than taught, to one person who went on to write about it and in the process somewhat divorced it from its source which was the Confucian 'Hsing' which I learned about while living in Singapore and which word, so I was informed, was also used by Taoists, with the Confucian sense suggesting to me what the Greek φύσις did.

≡ ≡ ≡

*From my understanding you would have lived geographically close to the "Magick Shop" called The Sorcerer's Apprentice back in the 70's. Were you active in that scene, did you ever come into contact with Chris Bray, Austin Osman Spare, Peter J. Carroll, and/or Ray Sherwin, and if so, what was the discourse and atmosphere like?*

No, I never visited that shop while living in Leeds nor met the individuals you mention. My contact with Mr Bray, such as it was, was by means of postal letters and formed part of what turned out to be a misguided and in hindsight a reprehensible attempt to form an 'underground' neo-nazi honeytrap. As I endeavoured to explain in my 2012 essay *A Matter Of Honour*, in response to claims made by Jacob Senholt,

"Finally, the omitted facts and circumstances that do not support Senholt's claims and conclusions include: (1) My publicly stated admission, made in the 1990's in correspondence with Professor Kaplan and others - and publicly repeated by me many times in the past ten and more years - that my occult involvement, such as it was in the 1970's and later, was for the singular purpose of subversion and infiltration in the cause of National-Socialism, with part of this being to spread racist ideas and denial of the holocaust. Thus one such occult group I associated with was a honeytrap, and the whole intent was political, revolutionary, not occult and not to with 'satanism'. It was a matter of using, or trying to use, such occult groups for a specific neo-nazi purpose without any interest in or personal involvement with the occult..."

Not long after the formation of this honeytrap a good political friend of mine, who at the time was briefly associated with the National Front, took charge of the small group and in subsequent years would occasionally ask me for a favour, one of which was writing, in the early 1980s an article titled *Witch of the Welsh Marches* which was subsequently published in Mr Bray's *Lamp of Thoth* magazine with the title mistakenly corrected by him to 'Witch of the Welsh Marshes.' I also sent to Mr Bray a 1970s article of mine titled *The Approach Of The Dark Gods* which, if my ageing memory is correct, was also published in that magazine.

The first article simply recounted my meeting with an elderly woman when I was living in Shropshire, with the second article similarly recounting old pagan traditions one person who had joined that honeytrap in the 1970s had spoken about.

I did mention doing a favour for that friend of mine in a 1998 taped interview, with an iniquitous person of the anti-fascist variety, <sup>2</sup> and refused to name this friend. A refusal because I had personally given that person my word of honour not to do so. A few years earlier I had mentioned this friend, again without naming him, in a letter dated 20 June 1996 to Professor Kaplan who wrote, in the book *Nation and Race: The Developing Euro-American Racist Subculture* published in 1998, that my "interaction with England's occult underground was undertaken in a clandestine effort to influence [some] to adopt National Socialist beliefs" and that my relationship with the occult is also based on personal friendship and an agreement to agree to disagree on many things.

≡ ≡ ≡

*Was there any particularly important event that occurred for you and your associates in 1997?*

Yes, it was the arrest of Charlie Sargent and Chris Castle and their subsequent conviction for murder. I had given Charlie and Steve Sargent a personal pledge of loyalty and so stayed loyal, accepting his version of events and believing not only that it was Browning who stole the missing money but also that Browning had betrayed the Cause by giving evidence in a Court of Law for the Prosecution. I had also been informed that Browning and his gang were the ones spreading malicious, unproven, rumours that Charlie was a Police informer whereas it was Browning himself who was co-operating with the Police; hence his turn as a witness for the Prosecution and the fanciful, scripted, tale he told in Court.

As I wrote at the time,

"there was some feuding within C18 itself, with Browning challenging Charlie for the leadership and accusing him - on the basis of ZOG disinformation - of all sorts of things, such as stealing some funds. As for Charlie, he was convinced that Browning had stolen the missing C18 funds [...]"

Instead of doing the honourable thing - closing ranks against the State - Browning went to the Police and agreed to give evidence in a ZOG Court against Charlie. Since we all were supposed to regard the Police, the Courts and the whole system of so-called justice run by our government as our sworn enemies, this to me at least amounted to treachery of the worst kind, and so I challenged Browning, in public, to a duel. I did this not once, but twice." <sup>3</sup>

Apropos Browning, another iniquitous person of the anti-fascist variety, in his book, *Homeland: Into a World of Hate*, made several accusations about me without providing any evidence from primary sources, as well as published some rumours about me again without providing any evidence or providing my side of the story. For instance, he claimed that "when Myatt later falls out with Will Browning, he insists on a duel... I'm told he backed down when The Beast claims the right to use baseball bats as weapon."

The truth is that, impersonally through a contact (Kevin Watmough) and via e-mail, I learned that apparently Browning did suggest such a weapon, and in a reply to Watmough stated that the only weapons which could be honourably used were deadly weapons, such as swords or pistols. I included with my reply a copy of the Rules of Duelling, and re-affirmed my challenge to fight a duel using such deadly weapons. I received no reply from Watmough and was not contacted in any way by either Browning or any his supporters despite the fact that Browning and his gang knew where I lived, with my then wife and family in a detached house in a village near Malvern from which house I produced my *The National-Socialist* newsletter in support of the NSM and where I would be arrested, as part of Operation Periphery, by Special Branch officers based at Scotland Yard during a dawn raid in February 1998.

≡ ≡ ≡

*Have you ever visited Test Valley, and if so, how did it make you feel?*

Not that I recall. In fact, the only place in Hampshire I can recall visiting is Winchester, to stay with a comrade from Column 88 and to tour the Cathedral.

≡ ≡ ≡

*What happened before the summer of 1998 that caused you to abandon everything you were working on and convert to Islam? Was it an international attempt to explore another culture for personal insight? What was that experience like for you? Did you take away any profound gnosis?*

As I endeavoured to explain in a Summer 2022 interview,

"In 1998 I turned away from National-Socialism to Islam because during a decade (1988-1998) of foreign travels the culture, the Muslims, of the Muslim lands - and especially of Egypt - slowly, almost imperceptibly, impressed me as did, and perhaps more so, travels alone in the Sahara Desert where I wordlessly felt intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God." <sup>4</sup>

One of these journeys into the desert involved me in cycling from Cairo to the oasis of Daklah laden with fifteen litres of water in three plastic containers; one atop the rear rack and one each in the panniers on either side, sufficient according to my calculations to last until the first stop at Bahariya oasis, with the terrain *hammada*, flat rock-strewn, desert with some wind-blown sand, rather than archetypal sand-dunes. On that first and the subsequent stop at Farafra I encountered, during my brief overnight stays, the Adhan as I had in Cairo. But there, in those at the time still rather isolated places, hedged in by desert, the Adhan somehow seemed more relevant, more numinous, as if in some way it embodied those wordless intimations of Being, of θειότης, of divinity-presenced.

"The numinous is θειότης, divinity-presenced, as in tractate XI v. 11 of the Corpus Hermeticum, θειότητα μίαν, and as in Plutarch, De Pythiae Oraculis, 407a, 398a-f. The numinous is essentially what is, or what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) that which is felt, experienced, or understood as

sacred, numinal, sublime, divine, awe-inspiring, beautiful, and beyond our ability, as mortals, to control or meaningfully express through the medium of words. For Christians, it is considered to be God; for Muslims, Allah; for the Romans, divinitas; for others ancient and modern, it was and is considered to be expressible, or intimated, by mythoi and presenced in ὁ θεός, the deity, and/or by θεοί, the gods." <sup>5</sup>

I could not help contrasting this experience with my violent, propaganda-strewn, decades as a fanatical hateful National-Socialist, and it was such feelings, such experiences, such intimations, that culminated in me, on my return to Cairo, buying a copy of The Quran with Arabic text and an English translation, and, on my return to England, beginning to study Islam, followed by a visit to the nearest Mosque.

≡ ≡ ≡

*In the article Witch of the Welsh Marches that you wrote for Lamp of Thoth you mention happening across a Cunning Woman with some interesting abilities. Could disclose more information on this event and the individual?*

Having just re-read that old item perhaps the only relevant remembering is how she was accepted by the few local, rural-dwelling, people who knew her with the terms 'witch' and 'witchcraft' and 'cunning woman' never used by them in reference to her. My use of the terms 'witch' and 'cunning woman' were thus assumptions which I naively and wrongly applied to her.

≡ ≡ ≡

*You are certainly a man that has a passionate interest in ancient mythology, but I'm curious what you know about the mythos of King Arthur?*

While living in rural Shropshire from the late 1970s to the late 1980s I did hear some old folk tales about King Arthur and connections to that county and jotted some of them down, which scribblings I subsequently lost although I did send some of them to an artistic friend I made during the latter part of that period. The person in question apparently became so enamoured of rural South Shropshire, and such mythoi, that he subsequently settled, for a while at least, in that area.

One such tale recounted that Arthur was buried in a mound in what later became Shrewsbury town; that the Nyneve of Le Morte D'Arthur dwelt in a Shropshire lake; and that Arthur and his Knights fought a battle near the Camlad river.

≡ ≡ ≡

*You have mentioned that cycling is the most civilised form of transport. Could you expand on your reasoning and how it plays into your ethos and philosophy?*

An interesting question and such an expression seems to be that something I might have written although I cannot now recall when and in what particular missive among the thousands.

Certainly, musing on cycling mostly in Britain and often in rural areas from the late 1960s to past the year 2010, it felt and still feels very civilized to me involving some physical effort to produce motion, a direct connection with one's surroundings and with the weather of the moment; and producing no noise. There was a lovely feeling in the freedom to just being able to cycle somewhere. I also enjoyed the 'race of truth' - cycling time trials - at both local club level and those organized by what seemed to me the very British amateur-run Road Time Trials Council. Not that I ever won any club or RTTC time trials or even came close to winning. I also failed to break the hour for a 25 mile time trial although I twice was within a few minutes with the joke among my club being that I might have succeeded had I shaved off my beard. However, I did, one year, win my club's Best All Rounder trophy for the most consistent rider over a season.

The only connection I can make between such experiences and feelings, and my ethos (whatever that might be) and my philosophy, is pathei-mathos; a personal learning; of being in and with Nature through a certain physical effort, and of silently discovering new horizons as in cycling in the Sahara Desert and as in cycling English lanes, tracks, and roads as that almost year in the 1980s cycling every working day from Shrewsbury town to my place of rural employment near Bishop's Castle and then back again the same day and how, that Winter, the road was one day only kept open by a Snow Plough with several feet of ploughed snow lining the verges for over a week. Despite or possibly because of the effort - there was a steepish hill leading toward Bishop's Castle - and the cold there was a beauty breeding a calmness within.

≡ ≡ ≡

*During your time in the north of England did you ever visit Stanton Moor, and if so, were there any memorable locations?*

No, the nearest I ever was to that particular place was over a decade later while cycling in one day from Shropshire to

Fulwood near Sheffield via Buxton, Miller's Dale and Hathersage. An enjoyable if at times testing bicycle ride particularly as I had chosen to ride what cyclists of my era called a 'fixed wheel' cycle with a medium (42x16) gear, whose saving graces were the Mercian 531 frame and forks and a broken-in Brooks Professional leather saddle.

Which for some reason returns us to your question about cycling and whether it may be connected to my, as yet still - at least to me - unknown, ethos.

David Myatt  
July 29<sup>th</sup> 2024

1. qv. Appendix Two, *Notes on Aristotle, Metaphysics*, Book 5, 1015α, in *Physis And Jesus Of Nazareth*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/dwmyatt-physis-and-jesus.pdf>

2. Iniquitous because of the unproven allegations and assumptions made and propagated in the media, a few examples of which are that Myatt "lies through his teeth" - made to journalist Justin Ling in an item published in March 2022 - and that I am still a neo-nazi, with my philosophy of pathei-mathos and rejection of extremism a deception with such post-2011 writings thus not to be taken seriously. Thus he, and similar iniquitous persons of the anti-fascist variety, placed and place lies and propaganda on behalf of their beliefs before veracity, honour, and decency.

3. <https://www.stormfront.org/forum/t45466/?postcount=1#post287751>

4. Interview, Summer 2022, included in *An Uncertainty Of Knowing: Four Interviews*, 2023, ISBN 978-8394746575

5. *Empathy And Pathei-Mathos As A Guide*, in *Notes On War, Suffering, And Personal Judgement*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/dwmyatt-notes-war-suffering.pdf>

## An Interview With David Myatt On A Summer Solstice Eve

RS: Three recent and connected articles {1} written in response to an academic article about you {2} raise several interesting questions, for example about Vindex as archetype, and especially, as described in the *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity* article, about

"how the ideas and mythos were developed, evolved, {by you} over many years away from severe ideological, impersonal, and moralistic generalizations toward an emphasis on personal change through an authentic, first-hand, appreciation of virtues such as reason, restraint, and an empathy with all living things wrought through a rural living,"

and what if anything is left of those ideas and that mythos in your philosophy of pathei-mathos, and if nothing of them remain then who not?

DM: The authors of those 'three connected articles' were correct regarding how I during my former extremist years understood the term 'authentic', as "original; of one who does something for themselves, or of the 'principle' one or thing or {of a} being." That is, not in the sense used by Clive Henry in his article about me.

Hence I formerly regarded 'race' then 'the folk' and then a type of rural community as authentic; latterly as causal manifestations of the numinous understood then, and I quote, as

"Something is numinous if it has beauty and awe. Something which is divinely-inspired or divinely-representative is numinous. What is numinous is generally what is revered, or regarded as sacred - as spiritual or divine. Nature herself is numinous - a wonderful, awe-inspiring mystery. The numinous is an expression of the acausal - of the Unity behind causal, temporal, appearance." {3}

As for what is now left of those ideas and that mythos: absolutely nothing since in my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos the emphasis is on the individual, their empathy, their pathei-mathos, and therefore on the wordless-knowing that they reveal. Hence, what is authentic is that individual revealing and not some mythos, not some idea by someone else or by anything posited by some ideology, political or religious or social. As I wrote in 2022 in *Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*:

"as a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation. In the case of a 'revelation' the source is often named as God or a god/the god (θεὸς, ὁ θεός) who or which are often described by a myth or mythoi." {4}

Furthermore, my disputable understanding now is that the numinous is

"what manifests or can manifest or remind us of (what can reveal) the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful. In a practical way, it is what predisposes us not to commit ὕβρις, and thus what we regard or come to appreciate as 'sacred' and dignified; what expresses our developed humanity and thus places us, as individuals, in our correct relation to ψυχή, and which relation is that we are but one mortal emanation of ψυχή." {5}

"in terms of numinosity, empathy presents or can present to us in the immediacy of the personal moment an individual intimation or wordless knowing of the numinous, which intimation or knowing places our mortal life, and all we connect with it or is connected to it, into a supra-personal perspective which is a-causal and of Being itself, the source of beings and all being; of which Being we as a mortal are one finite deathful emanation. Which perspective brings with it or can bring with it the wordless knowing of the unwisdom of words." {6}

Thus, we can know the numinous wordlessly through personal empathy and through our personal pathei-mathos.

RS: Isn't that idealistic and not therefore realistic or applicable to most humans today around the world who are forced to struggle and endure suffering in order to just survive, or who live in poverty?

DM: Unfortunately, that is so. Personally, I have no answers to how to alleviate suffering, en masse, or how to alleviate poverty, en masse. Or how to solve the many other problems that exist in our modern world as they did in the past. All I have is my own fallible learning from experience which included forty years as an extremist who caused or who incited suffering.

But it is not enough, on the short time-scale of decades. Yet I nurture the probably naive hope that such a learning might influence a few people who personally and in the longer perspective might affect some change and thus be the genesis of something positive in regard to such suffering and such poverty.

My admittedly precarious understanding is that attempts by modern governments, well-intentioned as they may be, are or often seem to be offset by the suffering some of their other policies, internal and external, cause or have caused



based as those policies are on supra-personal abstractions, and sometimes also by the abrogation of policies by the government that succeeds them.

RS: Returning now to your extremist past, do you regret composing and publishing your National Socialist writings?

DM: Yes.

RS: That said, are you concerned they are still available?

DM: Yes, and No. No, because they document, for others, both my extremism and the extremism of a particular ideology, where by extremism I mean:

"to be harsh, so that my understanding of an extremist is a person who tends toward harshness, or who is harsh, or who supports/incites harshness, in pursuit of some objective, usually of a political or a religious nature. Here, harsh is: rough, severe, a tendency to be unfeeling, unempathic. Hence extremism is considered to be: (i) the result of such harshness, and (ii) the principles, the causes, the characteristics, that promote, incite, or describe the harsh action of extremists. In addition, a fanatic is considered to be someone with a surfeit of zeal or whose enthusiasm for some objective, or for some cause, is intemperate. In the philosophical terms of my weltanschauung, an extremist is someone who commits the error of hubris." {7}

A further no, because they are a reminder of my past errors and fanaticism and of the need for a personal expiation. Part of which expiation I believe, correctly or mistakenly, is being honest about my past extremism and another part of which is, again correctly or mistakenly, my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos and my other, personal, writings since 2012 such as *Almost Mid-Summer*, {8} and *Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing*. {9}

Yes, I am concerned since others may be inspired and possibly were inspired by them; although I have the perhaps naive hope that my writings since 2012 may somewhat offset that.

RS: In some of those NS writings such as *Why We Must Return To The Land* you eulogized the English rural life and manual labour as in these two extracts from your *Letters From An English Farm* {10} which were quoted in the aforementioned *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity* article:

"Another warm beautiful Spring day in the English fields of the kind that reminds how wonderful and simple life can and should be: there seem to be no problems here, by this small stream, and I sit on the now longish, greening grass beside it beneath a sky of variegated blue with only the sounds of birds for company. No breeze to stir the trees of the overgrown copse behind.

There, three yards away, a bare grass-free patch where animals have come to drink, leaving prints in the now dried mud: two deer, a fox. There is no human-made war here; no rockets, missiles, bombs; and I am left again to wonder with sadness why our species never learns. Once, many times, anger at such injustice would have roused me, all but controlled me, and I would have sallied forth to try and make things better. But now: now, I feel only the centuries of longing that have brought some of our species to that perspective, that compassion, that empathy that has grown within me as grass grows with each warming Spring. Such a gift, this soil." {10}

"I have learned that one of the most harmful things is an ideology, of whatever kind, political, religious, social: a belief we have the answers, and that some law, some government, some abstract idea, some political or social policy, or religious belief, can and will change things for the better, even though - as it almost always does - such a thing involves some suffering, some deaths, some people being deprived of their liberty, their freedom, and some individuals using whatever arts of manipulation they can to convince others of the correctness of such a thing, which is always supra-personal, and as such always involves some people, or some government, having some dishonourable 'authority' over others, on pain of punishment.

The simple way of reason, of restraint, of empathy with all living things, of symbiosis with Nature does involve us changing ourselves but such change involves only a free, conscious, individual, choice. Can we accept some of the hardships, the frugality, that such a life brings because we know that this is how we can and should live and that by so living we are not only not harming others, but aiding ourselves, our family, or locality, Nature and the Cosmos? All else seems, now, inauthentic, unnecessary, a turning away from the knowledge, the understanding, we have achieved - and especially a turning away from that empathy, that consciousness, that awareness of the matrix, of us as a connexion, a living nexus, which I have begun to feel is the essence of our humanity." {10}

My question is: does your philosophy of pathei-mathos retain anything of that idealism or personal experience?

DM: No it does not, which is perhaps remiss of me since such a rural way of life was instrumental in me re-connecting with Nature in a numinous way sans words, ideas, ideology and abstractions, and which re-connection placed my own life into a supra-personal perspective and began the process, before the death of Francis in 2006, of the re-evaluation of myself and of extremism that years later resulted in my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

So therefore I perhaps should write something about how an individual, or a family, can presence the numinous in a wordless way through such a rural living.

RS: Is that something you have hinted at in writings such as *One Tree Among Many* and *The Hour Before Dawn*, and *It Is Dawn* which I have collected here as Appendix I?

DM: Yes, hinted at, so perhaps such very personal experiences are all that needs to be written, for to write anything else, more than briefly recounting such personal experiences, now seems to me just waffling and making unnecessary supra-personal generalizations.

RS: You have written many recent items about Christianity, such as *JS Bach: BWV 118* {11} which apparently indicate a sympathy with that religion, or more particularly with Roman Catholicism - and I'm thinking of your items such as *A Sacramental Link?*, {12} and about TS Eliot, {13} and your vignette *Yuletide 2023* {14} - so would it be right to say that you're now a Christian, again?

DM: Although I respect many aspects of that weltanschauung and especially how Roman Catholicism presenced and in some way still presences the numinous - as in pre-Gregorian chant and Gregorian chant such as that of Hildegard von Bingen; as in the mysterium that is Latin Tridentine Mass and the sacrament of Confession; and as in the allegory of the life of Jesus of Nazareth, the message of The Beatitudes as I, possibly heretically, have translated them, {15} and as in his betrayal, his the suffering death - my feeling (and as often I use that word advisedly) is that I am now only my, possibly somewhat paganus, personal weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

In *The Johannine Weltanschauung* {16} written this year I expressed my concerns, past and present, regarding the acceptance by Christians of the Old Testament and of the interpretation of particular Hellenistic (κοινή) Greek words in translations of the New Testament. Which is why I would not now describe myself as a Christian.

RS: In 2020, and during the Covid 'lock-down' in Britain, you wrote: "Is this understanding - this intuition - the essence of a modern paganism? Personally I believe that it is." {17} Is that still valid?

DM: Yes, although, since we are mortal fallible beings, one never knows what events and experiences may occur to be the genesis of some future inner change.

---

The interview was conducted, via the medium of e-mail, on the eve of the Summer Solstice of 2024 CE, by RS who compiled the exchanges into the text that was converted to a pdf document; who also corrected some typos, added some punctuation for readability, and provided URL's for some of the references mentioned in the exchanges.

ooo

URL's correct as of June 2024

{1} The three articles are:

(i) *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity In The National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/davidmyatt-vindex-homo-hubris.pdf>  
(ii) the two-part *The Imagined Emotionology Of Mr Henry*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/imagined-motionology-dmyatt-parts1-and-2.pdf>

{2} The academic article is *David Myatt's Imagined Emotionology, his Striving for Authentic Aryan Emotional Communities, and the Dishonourable Wulstan Tedder*, by Clive Henry, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631180.2024.2319484>

{3} Appendix II of the third edition of *The Meaning of National-Socialism*, 115yf {2004} in respect of which date qv. footnotes {1} and {2} of *Vindex, Homo Hubris, And Authenticity*, op. cit.

{4} *Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

{5} Appendix VII of *The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

{6} *Empathy, The Hermetic Tradition, And Our Human Physis*, in *Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, op. cit.

{7} *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

{8} *Almost Mid-Summer*, <https://web.archive.org/web/20230606194010/https://www.davidmyatt.info/almost-midsummer.html>

{9} *Pathei-Mathos: Genesis of My Unknowing*, Appendix II of *Extremism And Reformation*,  
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/reformation-extremism-v3b.pdf>

{10} *Letters From An English Farm*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/davidmyatt-farm-letters.pdf>

{11} *JS Bach: BWV118*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/dwmyatt-bwv118.pdf>

{12} *A Sacramental Link*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/sacramental-link-1.pdf>

{13} *Poetry, Weltschmerz, And A learning From Experience*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/dwm-one-discovery.pdf>

{14} *Yule 2023*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/dm-2023-yule.pdf>

{15} *Gospel According To Matthew, Chapter Five, vv.1-10, A Translation And Commentary*,  
<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/the-beatitudes-v1.pdf>

{16} *The Johannine Weltanschauung*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/dwmyatt-johannine-gospel.pdf>

{17} qv. *In Middle Of The Month Of April* in Appendix I.

---

## Appendix I

### It Is Dawn

It is Dawn, breaking, in June in England as I, now an old man with three feet to guide him on his walks, {1} look out from an open window to hear the Blackbird beginning its song when the modern clock-time is around four o'clock in the morning. A song whose beginning varies as measured by such a modern human-manufactured time but whose genesis is the natural, unmeasured, rhythm of Nature. For only a month or so it was a clock-measured hour later at five o'clock.

The Dawn, here in a county of England, is a natural Dawn, when we remaining few, now or in memory, go or used to go out in all weathers, to contain the milk that our Cows, on farms, produced and which milk so many consumers in towns and cities still seemed to need or enjoy.

There was, or seemed and even now seems to me to be, a natural rhythm there, in such personal manual outdoor toil. A somewhat calmer and slower way of living that apparently has no or little place in the modern world that has evolved around us. But perhaps this is just nostalgia from a now geriatric man remembering former joys, which though sometimes forged in trying times, became for him at least the genesis of a supra-personal perspective.

David Myatt  
June 15th 2024

{1} Who with "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοῦς στείχει, παῖδός δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαΐνει. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 79-82. My translation.

---

### One Tree Among Many

Beside the stone wall that marks one of the boundaries of what has for several years been my home is an evergreen Oak; almost a dome of spreading branches and so tall it might well be an hundred or so years in age. The tallest tree around from near where several other and various and tallish specimens of arboreal life provide perches for those whose Dawn Chorus becomes, was, is, a hymnal to such natural Life as has for centuries pleased us.

Two months ago, the Oak was sad; with leaves dry and dying and infested. But now, as clouds break to reveal sky-blue, bringer of early Summer warmth: the tree has that light green of leaf rebirth, and catkins heralds of acorns an English season hence. So there is joy within as this aged man "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." {1}

Would that he might hear one more Dawn Chorus to so remember those, these, simple natural beauties of life which he as so many others so easily forgot enwrapped as he, they, were in believed in, in felt, selfish concerns which all will, must, die with us while the Sun again warms each year as it warms and life-sprouting rain seeds rebirth without any interference from us at all.

So I sit, windows of sky and trees to enlighten again my life, listening to a heartbreaking, suspended moment in my

measured out so very limited timespan of causal life: the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*.

DW Myatt  
6th June 2023

{1} τό θ' ὑπέργερων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. Aeschylus, Agamemnon, 79-82. My translation.

---

### The Hour Before Dawn

It is the hour before Dawn on the Spring Equinox, dark outside, with the Blackbird in the tree at the edge of the garden already singing. No other sounds, as yet, and there arises within me questions I have felt several times in the past few years.

Which are: is what we in a land such as this – a modern Western land such as England as Spring dawns even within, upon, urban conurbations – have acquired, developed, manufactured over the past few hundred years worth the suffering that has been inflicted upon other human beings, upon our forebears, and upon Nature? Is that suffering the price of such societies as we have developed and now seek to maintain?

Numerous overseas conflicts; two World Wars with millions upon millions dead, injured, traumatized, and cities, towns, Nature, destroyed. Numerous invasions and wars since then. Poverty, homelessness, injustice, inequality, crime, still within our lands. Has anything in terms of our humanity, of we being self-controlled, rational, honest and honourable – of ourselves as causes and vectors of suffering – really changed?

It is not as if I am exempt from having caused suffering. My past decades long suffering-causing deeds are my burden and will be until I die.

My personal, fallible, answers born of my pathei-mathos, is that unfortunately we as individuals have not as yet *en masse* changed sufficiently so as to cease to be a cause and a vector of suffering. Tethered as we still apparently are to causal abstractions, to -isms and -ologies, and thus to denotata and the dialectic of opposites, to the conflict that such denotata is the genesis of.

Perhaps we need another hundred, two hundred, or more years. Our perhaps we will continue, *en masse*, are we mostly now are, the eventual extinction of our sometimes stable causal societies of human beings acausally inevitable, fated; until the planet we call Earth finally meets its Cosmic end as all planets do, with we human beings never making real the visionary dream of a few to venture forth and colonize the stars. And even if we did somehow realize that dream, would we venture forth as the still savage, dishonourable, war-mongering species we still are?

Yet all I have in answer, in expiation for my own past suffering-causing deeds, is my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos; {1} so insufficient in so many ways.

David Myatt  
March 2023 CE

{1} The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

---

### In Middle Of The Month Of April

In the now still warm air of an approaching English dusk, in middle of the month of April, I can hear the birdsong of a Thrush while I sit, outdoors, near a blossoming Cherry tree.

Nearby, the garden of an Inn – a Tavern, a Pub – is eerily silent because deserted. At this time of year there should be, there was for decades, the laughter, the bustling, the joy, of human beings.

Such human silence is, for me, unprecedented. Making me aware of how transient we as a terran species are on this planet we have named as Earth. Were we all to die – from some future pandemic or other – would Nature, presenced in such life as birds and trees, endure? Possibly. Probably.

Were we as a species to survive some future pandemic or other would we humans as a species learn from such a pathei-mathos and change our Nature-destroying, our unemphatic, ways? Are we capable of learning from such a pandemic as currently affects our human species?

Somehow, I doubt that we in our majority would – or even could – change our ways. Yet – and at least in my experience – there is a minority who would, who could, learn, and an even smaller minority, a pioneering few, who already if only intuitively foresaw such a Nature-born human calamity as now affects us, our societies. Foresaw, and changed their ways of life accordingly.

Perhaps, as I myself intuitively feel – listening as I now do in the burgeoning twilight to the birdsong of a Thrush near a blossoming Cherry tree – those pioneering few are or should be our future. For they are those who, with families or alone, mostly live, often in rural or wilderness areas, "off grid" and thus disconnected from modern means of communication and striving to be self-sufficient in terms of food and other essentials.

For such pioneering few there are no ideologies; no politics; no interfering desire – political or religious – to change what-is into what others passionately believe should-be. Instead, there is only their family or an individual desire to live in a more natural, a more intuitive, way with Nature, with the Cosmos. Only an awareness of how we – as individuals, as a family – are a nexion to Nature, to Earth, to the Cosmos and thus an awareness of how what we do or we do not do affects or can affect Nature, Earth, the Cosmos.

Is this understanding – this intuition – the essence of a modern paganism? Personally I believe that it is.

David Myatt  
April 2020

Source: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com>

---

Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivs 4.0 license

---

## A May Day Interview With David Myatt 2024



Question: Based on your wrydful life [1] how would you now describe our human condition?

Answer: Forty years of personal and practical experiences in the real world led me to conclude that we as a species do not seem to have learned from what I have termed our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos which: (i) is described in memoirs, aural stories, and historical accounts such as *With The Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa* by Eugene Sledge;

(ii) has inspired particular works of literature or poetry or drama, e.g. Σοφοκλέους Οιδίπους Τύραννος;

(iii) is expressed via non-verbal mediums such as Art and music, e.g. John Dunstable: Preco preheminencie; and

(iv) is manifest in more recent times by 'art-forms' including certain films and certain documentaries such as *Monsieur Lazhar* and *Salt Of The Earth* by Juliano Ribeiro Salgado.

However, even now, in what is the 21st century of a certain calender, politicians and others continue to try and justify war and supra-personal armed conflict in the name of this or that manufactured causal abstraction, where there is always 'the-other' and 'we, the justified, the righteous', as is so evident in the current conflicts between Ukraine and Russia and what has happened and is happening in Gaza in which conflicts America and most NATO countries support and arm one side against the other. Which conflicts are just two current examples among so many around the world.

Moving on from such generalizations, a relevant real-life personal example is the 2008 case of Brianna Denison in Reno Nevada, with the coward responsible, rightly - in my opinion, based on my belief in personal honour [2] - sentenced to death, using the legal system to keep himself alive for over a decade. Furthermore, and insofar as I know, such personal violence happens almost every day in almost every land, in every designated modern nation, on planet Earth. Hence my assessment, in the 2023 missive *Nearly A Decade Ago* [3] that an observing alien from an extraterrestrial world would conclude that we are an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate otherwise".

In addition, as I wrote in that missive, "I was and am painfully aware of my own, decades-long, past of violence, extremism, conflict, intolerance, hatred, incitement, and selfishness," asking "whether my own fallible learning from experience and attempt at expiation, as manifest in my individualistic weltanschauung of pathei-mathos" has any meaning or relevance external to myself. [4]

It does not seem so, with even the answers of long-established religions and ways of life, such as Christianity, Buddhism, and Taoism, while having helped over millennia to reduce suffering through individual awareness of the numinous not having prevented individuals and nations from perpetuating, year after year, decade after decade, the cycle of human-inflicted suffering.

Why not prevented? Partly because of the vexatious problem of exegesis since all politics and most established religions and religious ways of life depend on denotata and thus on causal abstractions and on how such denotata are interpreted. Which interpretations can and do vary from political faction to political faction, from one political party to another, from one manifesto to another. While in the matter of religion, on interpretation of texts from decade to decade, from century to century, and which variations and disputations often led to conflict, schisms, persecution, and accusations of heresy as "in the case of the Alexandrian priest Arius (born c.250, died 336 AD) who voiced an interpretation of the difference between the denotatum θεός and the denotatum ὁ θεός in, for instance the Gospel of John, leading to that interpretation being denounced as heretical." [5]

Q: How, then, do you understand our future?

A: As a necessary and personal disengagement from denotata, from causal abstractions and from exegesis, to the very

personal perceivration that empathy provides. For,

"The numinous way - the philosophy - of pathei-mathos is based on four principles: (i) that it is empathy and pathei-mathos which can wordlessly reveal the ontological reality both of our own physis and of how we, as sentient beings, relate to other living beings and to Being itself; (ii) that it is [denotata] - and thus the abstractions deriving therefrom - which, in respect of human beings, can and often do obscure our physis and our relation to other living beings and to Being; (iii) that [denotata] and abstractions imply a dialectic of contradictory opposites and thus for we human beings a separation-of-otherness; and (iv) that this dialectic of opposites is, has been, and can be a cause of suffering for both ourselves, as sentient beings, and - as a causal human presenced effect - for the other life with which we share the planet named in English as Earth." [6]

Which disengagement will probably be very slow and over centuries, if it occurs at all on the scale necessary to reform, evolve, our human physis. For such disengagement is the lesson of our thousands of year old human culture of pathei-mathos.

For the learning has been and is that empathy and pathei-mathos are always directly personal perceivations and experiences, and thus have a 'personal horizon' meaning that they cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation.

But it seems that our current societies, at least in the West, incline so many from necessity or personal choice to not have the time, the means, the inclination to disengage from the temporal modern world to thus either spend months alone or with a loved one or with their family in some wilderness or remote rural area for weeks, months, on end, or to begin a new life in such areas.

Q: So you are pessimistic about the future?

A: I am neither pessimistic nor optimistic. It is what it is and what it may well be. As TS Eliot beautifully expressed it in his Ash Wednesday poem:

Because I know that time is always time  
And place is always and only place  
And what is actual is actual only for one time  
And only for one place  
I rejoice that things are as they are and  
I renounce the blessed face  
And renounce the voice  
Because I cannot hope to turn again  
Consequently I rejoice, having to construct something  
Upon which to rejoice  
And pray to God to have mercy upon us  
And pray that I may forget  
These matters that with myself I too much discuss  
Too much explain  
Because I do not hope to turn again  
Let these words answer  
For what is done, not to be done again  
May the judgement not be too heavy upon us

For me, now, that 'God' of his and of others is Being, ὁ θεός, The Ineffable, The Unknowing and Unknowable, The Acausal, The-Unity, The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), The Monas (μονάς) and which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God.

This Being is also, as described in the Corpus Hermeticum, both male-and-female:

Theos, the perceivration, male-and-female [ἀρρενόθηλυσ] being Life and phaos, whose logos brought forth another perceivration, an artisan, who - theos of Fire and pneuma - fashioned seven viziers to surround the perceptible cosmic order in spheres and whose administration is described as fate.

ὁ δὲ Νοῦς ὁ θεός, ἀρρενόθηλυσ ὢν, ζωὴ καὶ φῶς ὑπάρχων, ἀπεκύησε λόγῳ ἕτερον Νοῦν δημιουργόν, ὃς θεὸς τοῦ πυρὸς καὶ πνεύματος ὢν, ἐδημιούργησε διοικητὰς τινὰς ἑπτὰ, ἐν κύκλοις περιέχοντας τὸν αἰσθητὸν κόσμον, καὶ ἡ διοίκησις αὐτῶν εἰμαρμένη καλεῖται. [7]

Q: What then do you understand by 'pray' since TS Eliot's phrase

And pray that I may forget  
These matters that with myself I too much discuss

seems appropriate to describe what you wrote in 2014:

"My writings, post-2011, were and are really dialogues: interiorly with myself and externally with a few friends or the occasional person who has contacted me and expressed an interest." [8]

A: I understand prayer now in a contemplative way, sans words spoken aloud or unvoiced or read. Through, for instance, a listening to such music as provides a personal awareness of the numinous as for me in the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*; [9] in Dunstable's Preco prehemencie, in the Super Flumina Babylonis of Phillipe de Monte, in JS Bach's Aria Ich habe genug BWV 82, and many other pieces of 'classical' music.

But especially and primarily in a contemplation of Nature through for instance solitary silent manual outdoor work where there is a wordless awareness; or where one, again alone, is still and silent, and senses, feels, one's rural surroundings in a manner I attempted to describe in some letters I once wrote from which letters these are two extracts:

"There is a lovely, simple, pleasure here in this field. Spring is most certainly here: in the meadow fields, seedlings of the late Spring flowers push up through the tufts of grass whose frost-bitten ends are joined by shoots of new growth. Already some flowers bloom in the grass: there, a Dandelion; there: almost two circles of Daisies. And, to compliment the calls and songs of other birds, the loud repeating call of the Parus major.

It is good to be here, with an unobstructed view of the sky, and I watch the clouds, borne as they are on a still cool breeze that begins to chill my hands, a little. But there is Sun, warm, when the altocumulus breaks. On the horizon in the North, beyond the tall old Oak, small Cumulus clouds drift toward the hills, ten miles distant.

Thus am I again - for these moments - at peace with myself, this world, listening as I do to a large flock of Starlings who chatter among themselves in the trees across from the drainage ditch, there by the copse of Ash, Oak, and a few young Beech [...]

Work, yes there must be work: toil enough to keep that balance. And work with these my hands, outdoors where lives the silence that I love as I feel the weather, changing, bringing thus an empathic living for me, in me, and for this life that lives around, emanating as it does in this grass, those trees, the clouds, the soil, the water, those flowers, the very sky itself." [10]

"A glorious warm day of full, hot, Sun and I after work lying in the warm still growing greening grass by the edge of one field at the back of the Farm - sometimes asleep - for what is probably an hour [...]

Beneath and around the old tall Oak, acorns have fallen, eaten or stored, or both, by Squirrels, for I can find and see only the top which once held them on the tree. The small pond with its incumbent still living branches, is smaller, greener now, home to algae and slime, and the large Dragonfly hovers above the greenish water, to fly around to return to hover. A fly - or something, for I cannot quite see from here - passes it by and the Dragonfly darts around, chasing it away from the water. It is a chase, for I see this happen twice, three times. Then the Dragonfly is gone, toward the bushes, the branches. In the field, a single tall Cornflower amid the yellow buttercups, the purple Clover, the Vetchling and Hawksbeard. Field-walking, I can see the Church in the two-mile distant village whose bell I can hear, here, come Sunday morning. And now, at last, I am here in the neglected one-acre strip whose fruit-giving, flowering hedges have been untrimmed for years [...]

I have no land, no field or fields, to call my own where I can tend and care as life, field-grown, field-sown, field-fare, should be tended with care born from dwelling, feeling, there. I only work, toiling, for another, to keep me fed, housed, clothed, tired and, sometimes, content, as now where two small brown butterflies spiral and dance around the greening growing grass where I have sat to sit crossed legged writing this, chewing on a sweet stalk of grass. So warm the Sun I can forget what should-be in the what-is of warmth: in the gentle music of leaves, breeze-brought. A few small cumulus clouds drift West to East over the nearby wooded hill, and I know, sense, feel, that here in this field, under this Sun, is Paradise." [10]

Q: But what then can be done for others in your land and in other lands to make their lives better?

A: My fallible conclusion now is that it can only be individual, through personal example, personal honour, and/or by what we feel we can or perhaps need to express by adding to our human culture of pathei-mathos through some medium such as poetry, music, Art, autobiographical writings, drama, scholarly research, and so on.

Q: Finally, in an interview in August of 2022 you were asked the following question: "[since] your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?"

To which you replied:

"No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given



my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

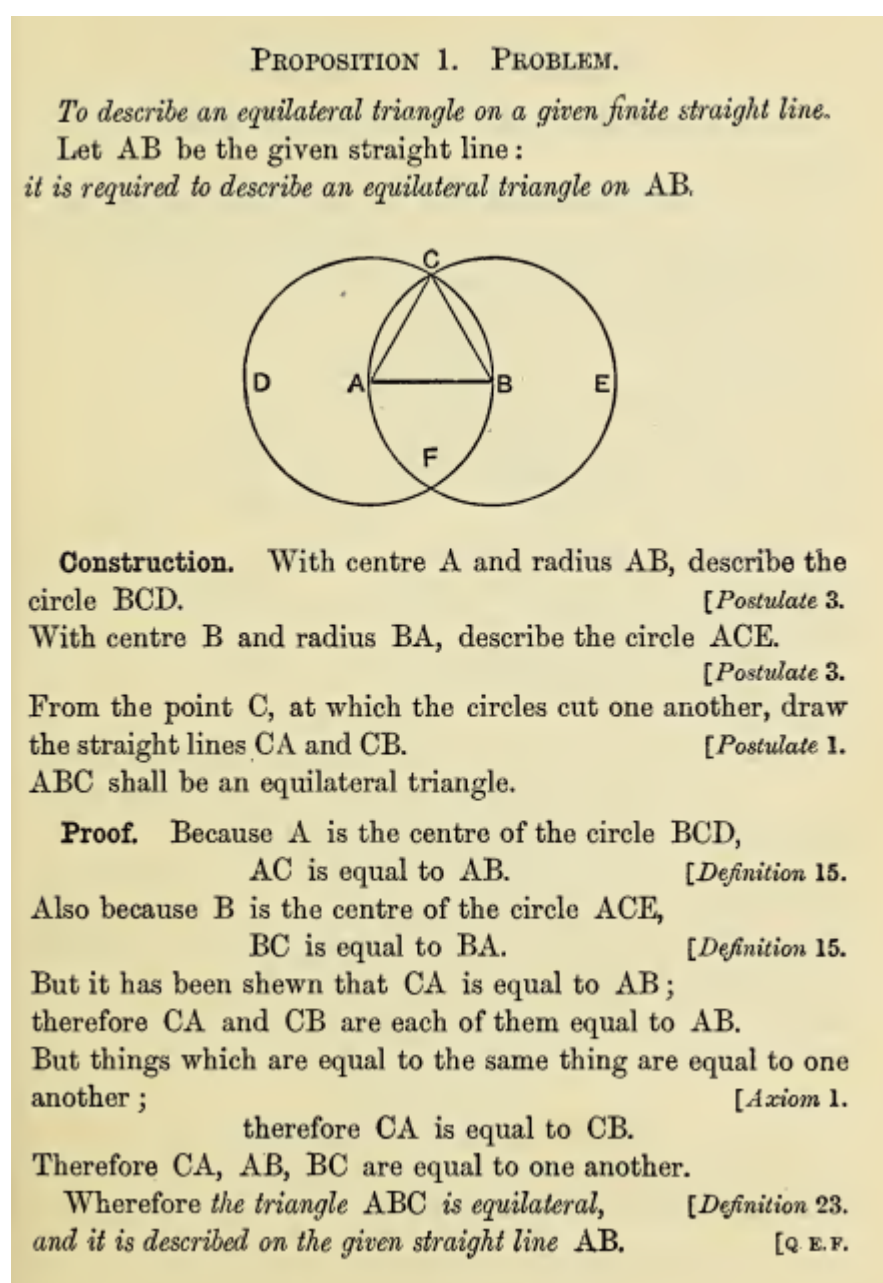
They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing." [11]

My question now is whether you have anything to add.

A: Only that, and to paraphrase what someone wrote in March 2024, it does not surprise me how many individuals in our modern world:

§ seem to lack the ability to use logical reasoning when writing about or discussing a subject;  
§ do not research a subject for themselves using scholarly methodology and primary sources;  
§ commit fallacies of reasoning such as appeal to authority and ad populum;  
§ use an Internet resource such as 'wikipedia' as a source of information about a subject even though it is a tertiary source and thus is based on interpretive secondary sources. [12]

Perhaps if they had received in their youth a 'classical education', a learning of Ancient Greek, Latin, and a study of works such as *Hermeneutica Analytica Elenctica* and Euclid's Στοιχεῖα, they would not commit such errors. Personally, I well remember the joy I had as a schoolboy in reading the set text *The Elements of Euclid For The Use of Schools and Colleges*, and in solving the geometrical problems we were given based on that text.



ooo

v. 1. 04. The interview was conducted via the medium of e-mail by Rachael Stirling and has been slightly edited for publication.

ooo

[1] The 46-page monograph *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist* provides an overview. <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2021/12/11/a-national-socialist-ideologue/>

[2] An extract from *Honour, The Numinous Balance* is included in Appendix I.

[3] Included as Appendix II.

[4] Note by DM: Personally, I have a great respect for other religions and spiritual ways, and aware of how they each in their own manner, express, have expressed, or are intimations of, the numinous. For instance, I have come to

appreciate, more and more over the past few years, the numinosity of the sacred music of the Christian Church (especially Catholicism), from before Gregorian chant to Gregorian chant to composers such as Byrd, Dowland, Lassus, to Palestrina, to Phillipe de Monte, and beyond.

Thus such sacred music has become, for me, redolent of the beautiful, of humility, of tragedy, of a sacred supra-personal joy, of what is or can be divined through contemplative prayer. A remarkable treasure of culture, of pathei-mathos.

[5] *Exegesis And Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/exegesis-pathei-mathos-v1.pdf>

[6] *Physis And Being in The Numinous Way Of Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[7] Poemandres, v.9; qv. *A Note On The Term Noesis In Tractate XIII*, included in *Hermetica And Alchemy*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

[8] *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/dwm-2014-questions.pdf>

[9] qv. *One Tree Among Many*, included as Appendix IV.

[10] *Letters From A Farm*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/dwmyatt-farm-letters.pdf>

[11] The interview is included in *An Uncertitude Of Knowing: Four Interviews*, ISBN 9798394746574

[12] *Some Signs Of Our Era*, <https://archive.org/download/signs-of-modern-era/signs-of-modern-era.pdf>

ooo

Image Credit:

NASA – Earth and Moon as seen from the departing Voyager 1 interplanetary spacecraft

---

## Appendix I

### Honour - The Numinous Balance

The personal virtue of honour, and the cultivation of wu-wei, are – together – a practical, a living, manifestation of our understanding and appreciation of the numinous; of how to live, to behave, as empathy intimates we can or should in order to avoid committing the folly, the error, of ὕβρις, in order not to cause suffering, and in order to re-present, to acquire, ἀρμονίη.

For personal honour is essentially a presencing, a grounding, of ψυχή – of Life, of our φύσις – occurring when the insight (the knowing) of a developed empathy inclines us toward a compassion that is, of necessity, balanced by σωφρονεῖν and in accord with δίκη.

This balancing of compassion – of the need not to cause suffering – by σωφρονεῖν and δίκη is perhaps most obvious on that particular occasion when it may be judged necessary to cause suffering to another human being. That is, in honourable self-defence. For it is natural – part of our reasoned, fair, just, human nature – to defend ourselves when attacked and (in the immediacy of the personal moment) to valorously, with chivalry, act in defence of someone close-by who is unfairly attacked or dishonourably threatened or is being bullied by others, and to thus employ, if our personal judgement of the circumstances deem it necessary, lethal force.

This use of force is, importantly, crucially, restricted – by the individual nature of our judgement, and by the individual nature of our authority – to such personal situations of immediate self-defence and of valorous defence of others, and cannot be extended beyond that, for to so extend it, or attempt to extend it beyond the immediacy of the personal moment of an existing physical threat, is an arrogant presumption – an act of ὕβρις – which negates the fair, the human, presumption of innocence of those we do not personally know, we have no empathic knowledge of, and who present no direct, immediate, personal, threat to us or to others nearby us.

Such personal self-defence and such valorous defence of another in a personal situation are in effect a means to restore the natural balance which the unfair, the dishonourable, behaviour of others upsets. That is, such defence fairly, justly, and naturally in the immediacy of the moment corrects their error of ὕβρις resulting from their bad (their rotten) φύσις; a rotten character evident in their lack of the virtue, the skill, of σωφρονεῖν. For had they possessed that virtue, and if their character was not bad, they would not have undertaken such a dishonourable attack.

Extract from

The Numinous Balance of Honour,

<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

---

## Appendix II

### Nearly A Decade Ago

Nearly a decade ago I considered a particular question: what opinion would a hypothetical visiting alien from another star-system form about us? [1] My answer was that the alien would consider us an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate otherwise.

Subsequent to that I pondered four related questions. First, is there any land on planet Earth, any of what are now called countries and nations, that over the past three thousand years that has not been fought over or subject to the clash of opposed armed violent groups of mostly men? Second, how many countries or lands now, for whatever reason or because of whatever excuse or whatever supra-personal causal abstraction, are not the subject of some armed conflict domestic or foreign? Third, how many countries are still plagued by homicides, robbery, theft, fraud, rape, domestic violence, subsuming hatred, poverty, dishonesty, and corruption political or otherwise? Fourth, have we as a supposedly consciously-aware species capable of reason and of honour [2] learnt anything from thousands upon thousands of years of such conflict, hatred, and such violence personal and impersonal?

In seeking answers to such questions I was and am painfully aware of my own, decades-long, past of violence, extremism, conflict, intolerance, hatred, incitement, and selfishness. Of whether my own fallible 'learning from experience' and attempt at expiation, as manifest in my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos, [3] has any meaning or relevance external to myself.

But that weltanschauung is all I have in answer. The answer of a personal, a non-interfering, empathy, compassion, humility, and of a personal honour in the immediacy of a living moment. [4]

Will we, can we, as a species change? Evolve away from the violence, the mistakes, the hatreds, the dishonours, of our past and of our present?

David Myatt  
July 2023

[1] Included as Appendix III..

[2] Sophocles, *Antigone*, v. 334 & vv. 365-366:

πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδ' ἐν ἀνθρώπῳ δεινότερον πέλε [...]  
σοφὸν τι τὸ μηχανόεν τέχνας ὑπὲρ ἐλπίδ' ἔχων  
τοτὲ μὲν κακόν, ἄλλοτ' ἐπ' ἐσθλὸν ἔρπει

There exists much that is strange, yet nothing  
Has more strangeness than a human being [...]  
Beyond his own hopes, his cunning  
In inventive arts – he who arrives  
Now with dishonour, then with chivalry

[3] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/numinous-way-pathei-mathos-v7.pdf>

[4] An extract from *Honour, The Numinous Balance* is included in Appendix I.

---

## Appendix III

### A Non-Terrestrial View Of Planet Earth

Several times, in the last decade or so, I have – when considering certain current events, and social change, and the activities, policies, and speeches, of certain politicians – often asked myself a particular question: What impression or what conclusions would a non-terran (a hypothetical visiting alien from another star-system) have of or draw from those events, such social change, and those politicians? And what, therefore, would be the conclusions that such a non-terran would make regarding our nature, our human character, as a species?

Which answers seemed to me to depend on what criteria – ethical, experiential, ontological, and otherwise – such a non-terran might employ. Would, for instance, the home-world of such a non-terran be a place of relative peace and prosperity which, having endured millennia of conflict and war, had evolved beyond conflict and war and had also ended poverty? Would, for instance, such a non-terran view matters dispassionately, having evolved such that they are always able to control – or have developed beyond – such strong personal emotions as now, as for all of our human history, so often still seem to overwhelm we humans leading us and having led us to be selfish, to lie, to cheat, to manipulate, to use violence – and sometimes kill – in order to fulfil a personal desire?

The criteria I now (post-2011) apply to this hypothetical scenario are those derived from my own experience, and from

reflecting over several years upon that experience, which criteria are of course subjective, personal, and it is thus no coincidence that they now are reflected in my philosophy of pathei-mathos. Thus the ethics I assume such an interstellar space-faring sentient non-terran might adhere to are based on honour and the apprehension of suffering and hubris that empathy provides; just as the ontology derives from a numinous awareness of how causal and fallible and transient every sentient life is in respect of the vastness of the cosmos (spatially and in terms of aeons of causal time), with such ethics and ontology a natural consequence of such a culture whose genesis is that pathei-mathos – ancestral, individual, societal – that derives from millennia of suffering, conflict, war, poverty, corruption, and oppression.

Furthermore, my reflexion on the past fifty years of human space exploration leads me to further conclude that we as a species – and perhaps every sentient species – can only venture forth, en masse, to explore and colonize new worlds when certain social and political conditions exist: when we, when perhaps every sentient species, have matured sufficiently to be able to, as individuals, control ourselves (without any internal or external coercion deriving from laws or from some belief be such belief ideological, political, or religious) and thus when we use reason and empathy as our *raison d'être* and not our emotions, our desires, our egoism or some -ism or some -ology or some faith that we accept or believe in or need. For despite the technology making such space exploration and colonization now feasible for us (if only currently within our solar system) we lack the political will, the social desire, the trans-national cooperation, the vision, to realize it even given that our own habitable planet is slowly undergoing a transformation for the worse wrought by ourselves. All we have – decades after the landings on the Moon – are a few individuals inhabiting and only for a while just one Earth-orbiting space station and a few small-scale, theorized, human landings on Mars a decade or more in the future. For instead of such a vision of a new frontier which frontier a multitude of families can settle and which can be the genesis of new cultures and new human societies, all we have had in the past fifty years is more of the same: regional wars and armed conflicts; invasions, violent coups and revolutions; violent protests, the killing and imprisonment and torture of protestors and dissenters; political propaganda for this political cause or that; exploitation of resources and of other humans; terrorism, murder, rape, theft, and greed.

How then would my hypothetical space-faring alien judge us as a species, and how would such a non-terran view such squabbles – political, social, ideological, religious, and be they violent or non-violent – and such poverty, inequality, and oppression, as still seem to so bedevil almost all societies currently existing on planet Earth?

In addition, how would we as individuals – and how would our governments – interact with, and treat, such an alien were such an alien, visiting Earth incognito, to be discovered? Would we treat such an alien with respect, with honour:

as a non-threatening ambassador from another world? Would any current government on Earth willingly and openly and world-wide acknowledge the existence of such extra-terrestrial life and allow Earth ambassadors from any country, and scientists, and the media, full and open access to such an alien sentient being? I have my own personal intuition regarding answers to such questions.

But, remaining undiscovered, what would our visiting alien observer report regarding Earth and ourselves on their return to their own planet? Again, I have my own personal intuition regarding answers to such questions. Which answers could well be that we are an aggressive, still rather primitive and very violent, species best avoided until such time as we might outwardly demonstrate – through perhaps having numerous peaceful, cooperating, colonies on other worlds – that we have culturally and personally, in moral terms, advanced.

Which rather – to me at least – places certain current events, social change by -isms, by -ologies, through disruption and violence and via revolution, and the activities, policies, and speeches, of certain politicians, and armed conflicts, into what I intuit is a necessary cosmic, non-terran, perspective. Which perspective is of us as a species still evolving; as having the potential and now the means to further and to consciously, and as individuals, to so evolve.

Will we do this? And how? Again, my answer – fallible as it is, repeated by me as it hereby is, and born as it is from my own pathei-mathos – is that it could well begin with us as individuals consciously deciding to change through cultivating empathy and viewing ourselves and our world in the perspective of the cosmos. Which perspective is of our smallness, our fallibility, our mortality, and of our appreciation of the numinous and thus of the need to avoid the error of hubris; an error which we mortals, millennia following millennia, have always made and which even now – even with our ancestral world-wide culture of pathei-mathos – we still commit day after day, year after year, and century after century, enshrined as such hubris seems to be in so many politicians; in -isms and -ologies; in disruptive and violent social change and revolutions; in armed conflicts, and in our very physis as human individuals: an apparently unchanged physis which so motivates so many of us to still be egoistic, to lie, to cheat, to steal, to murder, to manipulate, to be violent, and to often be motivated by avarice, pride, jealousy, and a selfish sexual desire.

As someone, over one and half-thousand years ago, wrote regarding human beings:

τοῖς δὲ ἀνοήτοις καὶ κακοῖς καὶ πονηροῖς καὶ φθονεροῖς καὶ πλεονέκταις καὶ φονεῦσι καὶ ἀσεβέσι πόρρωθέν εἰμι, τῷ τιμωρῷ ἐκχωρήσας δαίμονι, ὅστις τὴν ὀξύτητα τοῦ πυρὸς προσβάλλων θρώσκει αὐτὸν αἰσθητικῶς καὶ μᾶλλον ἐπὶ τὰς ἀνομίας αὐτὸν ὀπλίζει, ἵνα τύχῃ πλείονος τιμωρίας, καὶ οὐ παύεται ἐπ' ὀρέξεις ἀπλὲς τοὺς τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν ἔχων, ἀκορέστως σκοτομαχῶν, καὶ τοῦ τον βασανίζει, καὶ ἐπ' αὐτὸν πῦρ ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖον αὐξάνει

"I keep myself distant from the unreasonable, the rotten, the malicious, the jealous, the greedy, the bloodthirsty, the hubriatic, instead, giving them up to the avenging daemon, who assigns to them the sharpness of fire, who visibly assails them, and who equips them for more lawlessness so that they happen upon even more vengeance. For they cannot control their excessive yearnings, are always in the darkness –

which tests them – and thus increase that fire even more." [1]

Which is basically the same understanding that Aeschylus revealed in his Oresteia trilogy many centuries before: the wisdom of pathei-mathos and the numinous pagan allegory of Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [2], and which wisdom was also described by Milton over a millennia later by means of another allegory:

The infernal Serpent; he it was, whose guile,  
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived  
The mother of mankind.

David Myatt  
2015

Extract from a letter to a personal correspondent

ooo

[1] *Poemandres*, 23. Translated by DWM in *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, 2017. Included in *Alchemy And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://perceiverations.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hermetica-alchemy-dwmyatt.pdf>

[2] Aeschylus (attributed), *Prometheus Bound*, 515-6, Translated by DM.

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἔστιν οἰακοστρόφος.  
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?  
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

---

#### Appendix IV

##### One Tree Among Many

Beside the stone wall that marks one of the boundaries of what has for several years been my home is an evergreen Oak; almost a dome of spreading branches and so tall it might well be an hundred or so years in age. The tallest tree around from near where several other and various and tallish specimens of arboreal life provide perches for those whose Dawn Chorus becomes, was, is, a hymnal to such natural Life as has for centuries pleased us.

Two months ago, the Oak was sad; with leaves dry and dying and infested. But now, as clouds break to reveal sky-blue, bringer of early Summer warmth: the tree has that light green of leaf rebirth, and catkins heralds of acorns an English season hence. So there is joy within as this aged man "his foliage drying up and no stronger than a child, with three feet to guide him on his travels, wanders – appearing a shadow in the light of day." [1]

Would that he might hear one more Dawn Chorus to so remember those, these, simple natural beauties of life which he as so many others so easily forgot enwrapped as he, they, were in believed in, in felt, selfish concerns which all will, must, die with us while the Sun again warms each year as it warms and life-sprouting rain seeds rebirth without any interference from us at all.

So I sit, windows of sky and trees to enlighten again my life, listening to a heartbreaking, suspended moment in my measured out so very limited timespan of causal life: the 12th century Cistercian *Répons de Matines pour la fête de saint Bernard*.

DW Myatt  
6th June 2023

[1] τό θ' ὑπέργηρων φυλλάδος ἤδη κατακαρφομένης τρίποδας μὲν ὁδοὺς στείχει, παιδὸς δ' οὐδὲν ἀρείων ὄναρ ἡμερόφαντον ἀλαίνει. Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 79-82. My translation.

## David Myatt: An Uncertainty Of Knowing

- Some Questions For DWM
- Myatt's Uncertainty Of Knowing
- David Myatt And The Pinch of Destiny
- Addendum: Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos
- Australian Interview
- Addendum: Analysing National Socialism

Between March 2022 and March 2023 David Myatt gave four interviews each one of which was informative about his philosophy of pathei mathos, his life experiences, about extremism, and about his current views. Together they provide a fairly comprehensive understanding of not only Myatt himself but also of his philosophy, or weltanschauung as he prefers to call it.

In addition to these interviews we include (i) the June 2022 text *Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos* which provides an insightful overview of his philosophy, and (ii) Myatt's 2012 text *Analysing National Socialism* where he explains why his post-2010 philosophy is contrary to and incompatible with National Socialism.

---

### Some Questions For DWM

#### Spring 2022

In the Numinous Expiation chapter of your *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos* [1] you wrote that

"One of the many problems regarding my own past which troubles me - and has troubled me for a while - is how can a person make reparation for suffering caused, inflicted, and/or dishonourable deeds done,"

and that you did not "know the answer to the question how to so numinously make reparation, propitiation."

Since that was written twenty years ago are you still troubled and have your views changed in regard to personally not seeking propitiation through a religion such as Christianity?

Yes, I am still troubled, burdened, by my extremist past and the suffering I caused by believing in, agitating for and propagandizing on behalf of the ideology of National Socialism and a particular interpretation of Islam.

For me, the source of such a burden is two-fold: how can I, and perhaps others, not cause suffering; and for me at least there is not and probably never can be any expiation, any reparation made.

The only answer I have now, as then, is an attempt to live in "a certain gentle, quiet, way so as not to intentionally cause suffering, so as not to upset the natural balance of Life."

Have I succeeded? I cannot presume to answer.

Which brings me to my next question. Some of your former political opponents do not believe what one socialist called your "change of heart". [2]

Hence they claim you are still a neo-nazi; that what you write and have written since 2010 such as your autobiography should be treated with suspicion and not taken seriously; that unless you come out in public to attend some sort of 'media circus' and directly answer their questions, they will never believe you; and that you are so concerned about your reputation that you continually search 'social media' sites and anonymously try to not only engage with them but try to cover-up your past.

How do you react to such claims?

φημί ἐγώ, Μαθεῖν θέλω τὰ ὄντα καὶ νοῆσαι τὴν τούτων φύσιν καὶ γινῶναι τὸν θεόν· [3]

Such a seeking to apprehend such things is what now and for the past twenty or so years has occupied me.

As for trying to cover-up my past almost everything I wrote during my neo-nazi decades and my decade as a Muslim is archived somewhere. In the case of my neo-nazi decades by what used to be called 'Special Branch' as I learned following my arrest by them in 1998, and also archived on the 'world-wide web'. In the case of my decade as a Muslim an archive of my Muslim writings also exists on the 'worldwide web'. [4]

Therefore, any attempt by me or by anyone to 'cover-up' my past would be pointless. In addition, I have no desire whatsoever to do so since what exists documents my mistakes, failings, extremism, and arrogance which I want those who may be interested to know, and which acknowledgment of my past by me led to that 'change of heart'. One person has used such archives to document my extremism and the weltanschauung I developed after my rejection of

that extremism. [5]

As for what they or others claim or believe about me now and the past, it is their burden howsoever brought-into-being, howsoever nurtured and howsoever it might be described by them or by others.

Occupied by the aforementioned seeking, I am now too near death, too wearied by my own hubris and acknowledgment of it, too saddened by how so much suffering is still caused despite our human culture of pathei-mathos, to be concerned about what others claim or believe about me let alone try to change anyone's beliefs or attitudes by engaging with them in whatever way.

In a compilation published in 2019 containing some earlier essays of yours about race and extremism and which compilation complemented your 2013 book *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* [6] you wrote:

"the personal fault of extremists seems to be that of being unable and/or unwilling to view, to consider, the good that exists in people, in society, and/or of ignoring the potential for good, or change toward the good, which is within people, within society, within what-is. To prefer the dream in their head to reality; and/or to prefer the struggle, the strife, the conflict, to stability and peace; and/or to need or to desire repeated stimulation/excitement. One cause of such things could, in my view - from my experience - be the inability or the unwillingness of a person, an extremist, to develop and use their own individual judgement, as well as the inability or the unwillingness to take individual, moral, responsibility for their actions and for the effects those actions personally have upon people." [7]

Is that and what follows about 'the good of society' and about what you term The Uncertainty of Knowing a reasonable summary of your understanding of extremism and of your past, and are you dismayed that such personal reflections are ignored?

That essay and my *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism* are indeed a reasonable summary, and which understanding was the genesis of my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos.

But as I wrote in *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*,

"My conclusions regarding extremism resulted from some years of moral, personal, and philosophical questioning and reflexion; a questioning whose genesis was a personal tragedy in 2006, and which questioning led me a few years later to reject all forms of extremism and develop my own weltanschauung - the philosophy of pathei-mathos - based on the virtues of empathy, compassion, and humility.

I make no claim concerning the originality, or concerning the correctness or the value or the importance of my conclusions about extremism. They are just my personal, and fallible, conclusions which - given my extremist past - may interest, or be of some use to, some people; and, being such personal conclusions, they are neither presented in an academic way nor are comparisons made with the work and the conclusions (academic or otherwise) of others about extremism."

Similarly, my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology.

One of the causes of suffering is of course what is now termed 'extremism' be it personal, of one's character, or ideological or religious or political or social.

As for such writings being ignored, no, I am not dismayed only sadly resigned as an old man to what appears to me to be the current reality of the unchanged perhaps unchangeable physis of some human beings "despite our thousands of years old human culture of pathei-mathos". Yet, and perhaps naively, I still nurture a slight hope that we mortals here on Earth can change in sufficient numbers toward being compassionate, empathic, and honourable and thus reduce the suffering we cause to other beings, human and otherwise.

In a 2017 monograph you wrote about καλὸς κάγαθός in a manner which some readers found controversial given you seemed not only to be suggesting some sort of new aristocracy but also some kind of new European style paganism. One striking passage is:

"[W]e are, ontologically, emanations of and presence Being, and are a connexion to the cosmos - to other presencings of Being - through, in terms of epistemology, not only reason (λόγος), perceivance (νοῦς) and wordless-awareness (συμπάθεια, empathy) but also through τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, through the beautiful and the well-balanced, the valourous and honourable, and those who possess ἀρετή, all of which are combined in one Greek phrase: καλὸς κάγαθός, which means those who conduct themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner and who thus manifest - because of their innate physis or through pathei-mathos or through a certain type of education or learning - nobility of character." [8]

Were you suggesting a new aristocracy and a new pagan religion?

I was suggesting, evidently not very well, that "the sophia, the sapientia, of theos is presented not in the 'word of God' (scriptures) but in the personal Greek virtues of τὸ ἀγαθόν, τὸ καλόν, and ἀρετή, and in the metaphysical principle denoted by the term αἰών," [9] and thus that those who conduct themselves in an old-fashioned gentlemanly or lady-like manner manifest an aspect of the numinous that was anciently described as "the sophia, the sapientia, of theos" [10] and that combined with empathy - manifest as empathy is in compassion and tolerance - that this could lead to a new non-theological awareness of, and a respect for, the numinous. One which being personal is non-doctrinal but akin to some ancient pagan weltanschauungen that existed for millennia in some Western lands as well as in other places around the world.



I summarized this non-theological awareness as

"we human beings having a connexion to other living beings, a connexion to the cosmos beyond, and a connexion to the source of our existence, the source of the cosmos, and the source - the origin, the genesis - of all living beings. Which source we cannot correctly describe in words, by any denotata, or define as some male 'god', or even as a collection of deities whether male or female, but which we can apprehend through the emanations of Being: through what is living, what is born, what unfolds in a natural manner, what is ordered and harmonious, what changes, and what physically - in its own species of Time - dies."

In another monograph I also suggested that

"an aspect of the paganus, Greco-Roman, apprehension of the numinous, of καλὸς κἀγαθός, is a [Ciceronian] awareness and acceptance of one's civic duties and responsibilities undertaken not because of any personal benefit (omni utilitate) that may result or be expected, and not because an omnipotent deity has, via some written texts, commanded it and will punish a refusal, but because it is the noble, the honourable - the gentlemanly, the lady-like, the human - thing to do." [11]

What are these civic duties and responsibilities? To a State, or nation, or as in Greece to a πόλις or as in Rome to a Caesar?

This is a subject I really should have written about in that monograph and it was remiss of me not to have done so. My mistaken assumption at the time was that readers would be aware of my previous writings about how my weltanschauung dealt with what I termed supra-personal abstractions or 'forms' such as the State and the nation. As in Parts Two, Three and Four of *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. [1]

In Part Three of that work I wrote that

"[i]n the case of the culture of pathei-mathos, it not only provides, as does the modern State, a perspective (and a teleology) unrelated to the judgement of a supreme deity and the promise of an after-life, but also points us toward answers rather different from those provided by proponents of the State, of liberal democracy, and of a jurisprudence concerned with international law and codifying and criminalizing what politicians, and/or some political theory, ideology, dogma, or agenda, deem to be bad.

For what that culture provides is an understanding of how all forms - be they considered political, or codified ideologically or in the form of a dogmatic hierarchical religion - have caused suffering, or do cause suffering sooner or later, because they are judgemental, supra-personal; and that such suffering is unjustified because it is individual human beings and indeed the other life with which we share this planet who and which are important; and that to alleviate and to prevent and remove the causes of suffering is necessary because a manifestation of what is good; that is, a manifestation of reasoned, balanced, compassionate, personal judgement, and of that learning, that knowledge, the insights, that personal experience of conflict, war, disaster, tragedy, havoc, violence, hatred, and pain, have taught and revealed to individuals for some three thousand years."

In Part Four I compared the answers of conventional religions and proponents of The State, writing that

"[i]n respect of the culture of pathei-mathos, I find within it an alternative to these two influential, but in many ways quite similar, ontologies with their powerful entities, their guidance, their punishments and rewards, and the progression of individuals toward some-thing which the powerful entity asserts or promises it can provide.

This alternative is the ontology of us - we human beings - as a transient affective and effective connexion to other living beings, an emanation of the flux of Life, of ψυχή. That is, of the separation-of-otherness - of I and of 'them', the others - being the result of a causal-only perception, and of denotatum: of our propensity to give names to, or to describe by means of terms, that which we observe to be or that which we assume to be is different to and separate from us, whereas, as empathy reveals, 'we' are part of, an aspect, of 'them' since 'they' are also finite, transient, emanations of ψυχή.

There is no abstract 'good' and 'evil' here; no division or cleaving asunder of φύσις (physis). There is only us in harmony, in balance, with our nature, our φύσις, or us not in harmony with our nature as an affecting and effecting, finite, transient, mortal, aspect of Life. If we are harmony - in balance with Life, with other life - we do not cause or contribute to or are not the genesis of suffering: we do not affect Life in a harmful way, and as I have intimated elsewhere love, compassion, humility, empathy, and honour, are a possible means whereby we, in harmony with our φύσις, can avoid harming Life and its emanations, be such life our fellow human beings or the other life with which we share this planet."

I went on to write that this

"alternative ontology, derived from the culture of pathei-mathos, suggests that the answer to the question regarding the meaning of our existence is simply to be that which we are. To be in balance, in harmony, with Life; the balance that is love, compassion, humility, empathy, honour, tolerance, kindness, and wu-wei,"

with wu-wei a Taoist term



"used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility and from a feeling, a knowing, that an essential part of wisdom is cultivation of an interior personal balance and which cultivation requires acceptance that one must work with, or employ, things according to their nature, their φύσις, for to do otherwise is incorrect, and inclines us toward, or is, being excessive - that is, toward the error, the unbalance, that is hubris, an error often manifest in personal arrogance, excessive personal pride, and insolence - that is, a disrespect for the numinous."

All of which implies, with one important exception, non-violence. The exception being the matter of personal honour in the immediacy of the moment when an individual is confronted with someone or some many who are intent on harming or bullying that individual or someone or some others nearby. The person of honour would defend themselves, with force if necessary, as they would when defending those being harmed or bullied.

Your writings about your philosophy have been described as making "inscrutably dense arguments." Is there a work of yours you would recommend for those interested in your philosophy of pathei-mathos? Finally what is your opinion of the book titled *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, a third edition of which was published in 2021?

A short introduction is my 2019 essay *Physis and Being* [12] with my 2022 text *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition* providing a more detailed perspective. [13] The third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt* [14] is a reasonably comprehensive overview.

May 2022

[1] *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*. 2013. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

[2] <https://web.archive.org/web/20121214002444/http://hurryupharry.org/2012/12/11/david-myatt-has-a-change-of-heart/>

[3] Poemandres, 3. "I answered that I seek to learn what is real, to apprehend the physis of beings, and to have knowledge of theos." Myatt, *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

[4] <https://web.archive.org/web/20101111104858/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

[5] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2021/12/11/a-national-socialist-ideologue/>

[6] *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism*. 2013. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[7] *Some Notes on The Politics and Ideology of Hate in Extremism And Reformation*. 2019. Third Edition. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/09/reformation-extremism-v3b.pdf>

[8] *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. 2017. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf>

[9] Chapter Three, *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*. Op.cit.

[10] The MSS of Tractate XI:3, *Corpus Hermeticum*, reads:

Ἡ δὲ τοῦ θεοῦ σοφία τί ἐστι;  
Τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλὸν καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ ἡ πᾶσα ἀρετὴ καὶ ὁ αἰὼν.

But the Sophia of theos is what?  
The noble, the beautiful, good fortune, arête, and Aion.

[11] *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua: Christianity, The Johannine Weltanschauung, And Presencing The Numinous*. 2017. Gratis Open Access pdf: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

[12] <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/collected-works-2/physis-and-being/>

[13] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/03/dwm-denotata-empathy-v1b.pdf>

[14] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/08/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

---

## Myatt's Uncertainty Of Knowing

Summer 2022

A transcription of an interview conducted and recorded by Rachael Stirling in England in early August 2022.

ooo

Rachael Stirling: We have been perusing an archive of your writings as a Muslim {1} which in retrospect make fascinating reading because you presented Islam in a way it is not often presented in English in the societies of the modern West. Are you embarrassed that those writings are still so easily accessible given that you have moved on?

DM: No, since they document an interesting and in terms of pathos an important ten years of my life.

RS: Our three part question is in relation to exegesis and what you wrote about it in Exegesis and Translation: Some Personal Reflexions {2} and what you wrote years earlier, as a Muslim, in The Difference Between Eemaan and Kufr,

"in Islam, we have the best example of a human being - the Prophet, Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) - to strive to emulate and follow, and which human example, when followed, produces in us a most noble, a most civilized, individual character. This best example, this noble and human way, is evident to us in Seerah, in Ahadith: in the Sunnah of the Prophet, Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) [...]

The simple but profound truth about Al-Islam is that this Way of Life, this Deen, works: for Al-Quran and the Sunnah, when followed, produce, and have produced, noble, honourable, civilized human beings, and they, and the guidance of Shariah, produce, and have produced, the most noble, the most civilized, communities in human history.

In essence, Al-Islam is the simple way of - the discovery of, the return to - Tawheed, which is to know, to feel, to remember, our correct relationship with and to Allah, our Creator and thus to know Allah as Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is. This knowing of The Unity, The Oneness, of Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala is expressed in Kalimaah Tayyibah - La ilaaha illallaahu Muhammadur rasoolullaah - which itself forms the basis for Kalimaah Shahadah, the declaration that makes one a Muslim, and which re-affirms one's Islam: that simple submission to submit to and to only obey Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala and that knowing that Muhammad (salla Allahu 'alayhi wa sallam) is the Prophet and Messenger of Allah, whose message, whose Allah-given revelation (Al-Quran) and whose life (Sunnah) are the guidelines, the means, by which we can return to, and know, Tawheed.

This knowing of, this remembrance of, this feeling of, Tawheed is the basis for Eemaan, for that simple and total reliance on, and belief in and trust of, Allah Subhanahu wa Ta'ala."

Would it be correct to suggest: i) that in many ways this echoes, with its mention of noble, civilized communities and its belief in trusting a person, what you wrote during your National Socialist years regarding Hitler and National Socialism; and (ii) that you believed you had discovered in Islam a means to creating a noble way of life as you formerly did in National Socialism; and (iii) that it was "the difficult question of exegesis" that began or at least contributed to your doubts about Islam?

DM: To some extent, yes that is correct, since it was practical experience over many years of the human reality, manifest in those who adhered to, or believed in, or supported such weltanschauungen, that caused me to begin to reflect upon not only questions of various interpretations of texts and words but also on questions in regard to denotata, the fallible nature of humans in general, and how if not immediately then over causal Time most if not all denotata were the genesis of an opposite and thus of a dialectic.

Thus, in regard to National Socialism my experience was of how my believed in version based on honour, loyalty and duty and thus as a manifestation of the numinous, was not the reality of perhaps a majority of persons who described themselves as National Socialists, and that even in the days of the Third Reich it had been so, mirroring as this seemed to do our propensity as human beings to in our majority so easily be or revert to being egoistical or materialistic when and if it suited us.

With Islam, I initially apprehended it as different, as a better manifestation of the numinous, just as I did in regard to Catholicism when I became a Christian monk. But suffice to say that my Muslim adventures over a period of almost a decade not only disillusioned me but forced me to confront my own flawed character and lack of understanding.

For it was not just that as an adult I was naively idealistic but also I did not understand the reality of what honour meant resulting in me both as a National Socialist and as a Muslim supporting and doing dishonourable deeds.

Which realization and awareness of my own flawed character was not due to anything I did or due to the aforementioned intellectual questioning, but due to a personal circumstance which was both tragic and beyond my comprehension: the suicide in 2006 of my then fiancée.

In the months following that tragedy such intellectual questioning became one of several means by which I sought to understand myself, the numinous, and honour, and thus that tragedy.

RS: In relation to not understanding "the reality of what honour meant." In many of your Islamic writings you mentioned honour and in Honour Is From Allah Alone quoted a verse from the Koran: "Those who seek dignity and honour should know that they derive from Allah (alone)," 35:10. In the same article you quoted a Hadith from Sahih al-Bukhari (8: 56b) which translates as "the best among you are those who have the best manners and character."

In your *An Open Letter To Nick Griffin of the BNP* - dated July 17th 2004 - you described honour as "a respect for others; a striving to be reasonable. Honour sets ethical limits to our behaviour - and prejudice, of whatever kind, is surely a negation of honour."

How after that tragedy did you arrive, if indeed you did arrive, at what honour thereafter meant to you?

DM: My fallible conclusion, some three years after that tragedy, was that I had previously, both as a National Socialist and as a Muslim, not considered honour as a denotatum; as a naming of some personal quality or personal virtue, such as dignity, grace, of good repute, which themselves are open to interpretation. In my National Socialist years I defined it by a written or aural code of personal behaviour such as described in the sixteenth century Booke of Honor and Armes. or by the modern one I included in my *The Meaning of National-Socialism*. {3} As a Muslim I considered it a gift from Allah and manifest in the life of the Prophet Muhammed as described in the Sunnah.

What I very slowly came to appreciate was that every denotatum has implicit in it or developes - is by virtue of its physis the genesis of - a named opposite, another denotatum, resulting in a dialectic and thus has the potential for discord; a discord evident in exegesis but more often than not evident in conflict, verbal and physical, between individuals and groups of individuals. The result is as Heraclitus expressed it a cleaving of physis with Enantiodromia a bringing-back-together of what has been cleaved apart:

τοῦ δὲ λόγου τοῦδ' ἐόντος αἰεὶ ἀξύνετοι γίνονται ἄνθρωποι καὶ πρόσθεν ἢ ἀκοῦσαι καὶ ἀκούσαντες τὸ πρῶτον· γινομένων γὰρ πάντων κατὰ τὸν λόγον τόνδε ἀπείροισιν εἰκόσσι, πειρώμενοι καὶ ἐπέων καὶ ἔργων τοιούτων, ὁκοίων ἐγὼ διηγεῖμαι κατὰ φύσιν διαιρέων ἕκαστον καὶ φράζων ὅκως ἔχει· τοὺς δὲ ἄλλους ἀνθρώπους λανθάνει ὁκόσα ἐγερθέντες ποιοῦσιν, ὅκωσπερ ὁκόσα εὖδοντες ἐπιλανθάνονται (Fragment 1, Diels-Krantz)

πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα (Diogenes Laërtius, ix.7) {4}

My understanding came to be that Enantiodromia was, or rather should be understood and appreciated as, empathy; the wordless-knowing of empathy by which we could perceive the physis of beings, their wholeness, without the need for denotata and the discord that denotata was the genesis of.

Given the personal horizon of empathy, the personal nature of empathy, {5} I considered that honour could not be understood by some supra-personal code or by reference to someone else be the reference to their life, their deeds, or their words. That it could not

"be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {6}

That is, I discovered that empathy is or can be the geniture of our Uncertitude Of Knowing as human beings and thus of that personal humility which during my Muslim years I had felt, through such things as Namaz, was a manifestation of the numinous.

Honour thus became, for me, a personal matter: of being fair, reasonable, well-mannered, and aware of the numinous and thus of my own fallibility.

RS:

Hence your rejection of all extremism?

DM: Yes.

RS: Yet your many vociferous politically motivated opponents have not accepted that you have rejected extremism with many still considering you a neo-nazi. Does that bother you?

DM: No. For judging by their deeds and words they live in a different world from the one I now inhabit or rather that I now perceive. My perceivation is a very local and personal one; of my locality, of Nature and its local emanations; of my relatives and friends and my interactions with and concern for them. That other world beyond - or should that be those other worlds beyond - this local personal world no longer concern me given my plenitude of past mistakes, my past hubriatic suffering-causing interference, and my recently discovered Uncertitude Of Knowing.

They, those opponents, in comparison seem to have that Certitude Of Knowing that I for many decades had, breeding as it did and does prejudice, intolerance, hatred, and discouraging as it did and does empathy, forgiveness, and a personal Uncertitude Of Knowing.

RS: One of your politically motivated opponents recently claimed that "nothing in Myatt's sanitized autobiography [Myngath] should be taken too seriously," {7} while a few years ago another stated that he knew what was in the original draft of Myngath and knew what was removed in the published, 2013, version, stating that you thereby had

tried to hide something.

Would you care to comment?

DM: The opinion or claim of someone - politically motivated or otherwise - is just their personal opinion or claim at a particular moment. The passing of causal Time - decades, centuries - often places such personal opinions and claims into context often because of some information having become revealed through scholarly research or otherwise, or because of the collapse of the society in which such a personal opinion or claim was propagated and believed by others.

As for drafts of Myngath, so far as I remember the first drafts were made around 2010 while I was still in thrall to some causal abstractions and several years before I as a result of further personal and philosophical insights reformed my 'Numinous Way' into my weltanschauung of pathei-mathos. For such drafts were just drafts, and thus subject to revision. Furthermore, those early drafts are still publicly available through the medium of the Internet, so there is not and was not any hiding of anything.

RS: In a ten page overview of your life, which overview contained some inaccuracies, {8} an academic last year wrote that you were "driven by a search for meaning and purpose, as well as an intellectual desire to find and create the all-encompassing and perfect political philosophy."

Would you agree?

DM: No, because during my National-Socialist decades I was driven by a somewhat fanatical desire to not only propagate what I then believed National-Socialism to be - an honourable, noble, way of life, a practical presencing of the numinous - but also to recruit people to that cause in the hope of creating a National-Socialist society in the land of my ancestors. Over those years I developed what I termed "ethical National-Socialism" and thus moved away from some of the policies and principles of the Third Reich such as the belief in the superiority of the Aryan race and the concepts of "eternal struggle" and of the "survival of the fittest" regarding them as incompatible with acting honourably.

During my years as a Muslim I nurtured a similar desire to propagate what I then believed the Muslim way of life to be: which again was an honourable, noble, way of life, and a practical presencing of the numinous.

There was thus no search for "meaning and purpose" because I foolishly believed I had already found a meaning and a purpose: for thirty years in National-Socialism and then for ten years in Islam. In 1998 I turned away from National-Socialism to Islam because during a decade (1988-1998) of foreign travels the culture, the Muslims, of the Muslim lands - and especially of Egypt - slowly, almost imperceptibly, impressed me as did, and perhaps more so, travels alone in the Sahara Desert where I wordlessly felt intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἕν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God.

As for a "perfect political philosophy", I never believed my ethical National-Socialism - my development of Hitler's National Socialism - was perfect, and as a Muslim rejected the very notion of politics, writing in The Knowledge of Islam,

"Siyasah is defined as the application of the Quran and Sunnah in the world: the means whereby Muslims can live in a community according to the command of Allah [...]"

It must be understood that siyasah neither means nor implies 'politics'. Politics is a kaffir term which expresses or manifests the concealment of The Unity, which Unity is the essence of Islam. To understand Islam, and the Islamic apprehension - and in particular how Islam can be applied in the world - is to consider Islam in Islamic terms only. To apply something like 'politics' to Islam and speak and write about 'Islamic politics' is a fundamental mistake which constitutes imitation of the kuffar. Why? Because such words and terms, of the kuffar, are always referred back to kaffir ideas and concepts - just as 'politics' is referred back to the polis of Ancient Greece, and 'State' to Aristotle, Plato, Marx and others. This is, in effect, causal - historical - reductionism which is completely at odds with the acausal revelation of Islam. It is also a making profane that which is sacred: divorcing the Divinity from the practical application of Islam. It is exchanging knowledge for Jahiliyyah [...]"

In effect, siyasah is sacred: it belongs to, and manifests, what is sacred, divine. This is in complete and utter contrast to the temporal, profane - and lower - nature of kaffir politics."

It could be argued that since that personal tragedy in 2006 I have been 'driven' by a desire to understand both my extremist past and extremism, as well as by a desire to apprehend the numinous and how, sans denotata, it is and has been and can be presenced to we human beings.

RS: Do you intend to write anything else about your life or your philosophy of pathei-mathos?

DM: Answering a similar question almost ten years ago I replied in the negative and yet went on to write an awful lot more. The honest answer is that currently I do not intend to, but one never knows what circumstances may conspire to bring about a perhaps vainglorious desire to pontificate some more.

RS: What is your view of Islam now?

DM: As explained in several of my post-2012 writings, I still consider Islam and Christianity as manifesting both now

and in the past aspects of the numinous especially in relation to expiation and such awareness of the numinous as can bring and nurture a necessary personal humility.

But since both rely on revelation through words, chiefly written but sometimes aural, and both have sometimes been interpreted by some or by many in such a harsh way as has caused and contributed to the suffering of other human beings, then I as a result of my pathei-mathos and of a study of what I have termed the human culture of pathei-mathos, cannot and do not personally believe in or support them. For given such a reliance on words, on denotata, they can and possibly will be interpreted in a harsh way in the future by others.

RS: Is your own answer, your philosophy of pathei-mathos, suitable to or applicable to others?

DM: No, for it is not a supra-personal philosophy nor a way of life which might be suitable for others but only the fallible conclusions I have derived from striving to understand and admit my many mistakes and from the learning that, sometimes against my will, I acquired or believe I have acquired from diverse, sometimes extreme, experiences.

RS: How would you summarize what you have learned?

DM: As an appreciation of empathy, honour, humility, and compassion as personal virtues which we as individuals strive to live by; as an understanding of the need to not interfere in non-personal matters; and as being non-violent with the one and the only exception that necessitated by personal honour when we personally or our family or someone nearby are confronted in the immediacy of the moment by someone or by some others intent on doing harm or demanding we submit to their demands.

In such circumstances personal honour means that we without hesitation oppose them and fight and if circumstances require it use lethal force.

RS: Which surely means that you and perhaps your family are trained to defend yourselves with lethal force if necessary?

DM: Yes indeed.

RS: Which all seems to me to be a very pagan way of living. Would you agree?

DM: Depending on how one defines 'pagan' of course!

RS: I mean concern for and prepared to and trained to defend one's kith and kin, and having a local, a community, perspective as in olden times in England of one's village and the small personally known community dwelling there and on nearby land.

DM: In that sense, yes it is somewhat pagan. Which pagan weltanschauungen seems to me to have over causal Time been replaced by many and various other weltanschauungen derived from and reliant on denotata. In the form of, for example, the idea of some supra-local entity - a region, then a "nation", ruled by some usually male potentate whose governance was enforced by coercion, threat of imprisonment, and ultimately violence; and then in the form of the idea of a religion - in the Isles of Britain, Christianity, whose representatives were often in league with that regional or national potentate, hence inscriptions such as Dei Gratia Rex Angliæ on coinage.

RS: How do you view the current situation not only in England, the land of your ancestors, but worldwide and does your weltanschauung of pathei-mathos inform your view?

DM: My view is somewhat coloured by - perhaps I should have said informed by - my decades of rural living and working outdoors on farms and as a gardener, rather than by anything philosophical.

Perhaps a poem - one of my many "manically-depressed", "self-indulgent" poems, as one of my many political opponents once described them some years ago - may better express what such living and working have meant to me:

So this is Peace:  
As the Sun of warm November  
Warms and the grass grows with such mildness.

No strife, here;  
No place beyond this place  
As Farm meets meadow field  
And I upon some hessian sack sit, write  
To hear some distant calls from hedged-in sheep:

No breeze  
To stir the fallen leaves  
That lie among the seeds, there  
Where the old Oak towers, shading fence  
From Sun  
And the pond is hazed with midges.

So this is peace, found  
Where dew persists,

Flies feed to preen to rest  
And two Robins call from among that tangled brambled  
Bush  
Whose berries – unplucked, ripened – rot,  
While the Fox-worn trail wobbles  
Snaking  
Through three fields.

So, the silent Buzzard soars  
To shade me briefly:  
No haste, worry, nor Hubris, here  
Where there is much sadness, leaving  
As the damp field-mists of morning  
Have given way  
To Sun

A way of life, rural places, changed and changing: and for what and why? In some ways my weltanschauung of patheismathos is my answer: a way to live without the hubris of human-manufactured urban-centric supra-personal causal abstractions; a way where the natural balance that is presented through empathy and honour is an intimation of the numinous; and where there is an ancestral peace found, wordlessly treasured, and passed-on to the next generation.

RS: You expressed such sentiments in a letter - more of a missive - that you sent to me over a decade ago when you left that farm having had to seek work elsewhere. Which reading of that letter might be, if you agree, a fitting end to this interview.

DM: Agreed. But it will most probably be described as one of my "manically-depressed", "self-indulgent", missives!

RS:

"Work, in a small industrial concern; manual work with days spent indoors where the only light is from a multitude of bright fluorescent tubes and where the tedium of long hours is relieved only by a short morning break and one half unpaid hour for lunch when I sit, hedged-in by walls, in the small back yard on an old box upon broken concrete surrounded by broken glass; by old, smashed bricks; by patches of oil, and the detritus of such an urban place. Some sky - but not much - is visible over and above the roof and walls and vents, and nothing natural lives or even exists here: no tree, no bush, no flowers, not any weeds. No sound of birds - only noise, from the unceasing machines; from the lorries and vans which arrive and depart nearby, disgorging and receiving their goods. No peace; certainly no Numen of Nature.

There is only the incessant unnatural rhythm of industrial life, of factory toil - a card to be stamped by a clock: in, out, even for lunch. And, at days end, I - tired as the others - slope off and out into the nearby street where no one, passing, says "hello!" or greets me as almost always they did in those small villages of England where I have mostly lived. No, no greeting here; not even any eye-contact, held. For this is urban life where humans are shunted to shuffle encased in their worries, their inner worlds, and where traffic gluts streets. Nowhere here the calm, measured, quiet of that life, rural, where Time is what it is. Instead, there is abstraction, measuring out our lives as the clear water from a leaking tank seeps out, to the dirty ground, drop by drop by drop; drip drip dripping away, clean water to dirty ground... So I am once again adrift; not lost but far, far from home and measuring out my days until, sufficient money saved, I can return to the source of my belonging: there, where such dreams in such quiet places as may bring the Numen back to me.

Yet here, in this place of work, people rush to compete as if such swift toil was a badge of pride; thus do they scamper, to complete abstractly-imposed tasks; for profits, and ego, must be made, saved. Thus do we toil - so many slaves, en-slaved, needing but not-needing the pittance to live such a life as lives among the urban clutter, the smallness, the meanness and the sprawl. But I, I have seen the sky and hold here in my being such visions as bring the Earth to earth - dust to dust, and life to Life: one world, one planet, one dimension, among so many. Nowhere for so many in day or night that sigh when we close our eyes to feel the oboe d'amore of one slow movement of one piece by JS Bach, bringing thus such quiet tears of empathy as connect us, one human life, to other human lives beyond the-words the-abstractions - and thus take us out, out, out into the being, the Numen, of Nature. There is then in such a moment that sacred precious meaning which cramped urban living, and traffic, has, these days, defiled.

No beauty, here, no song to the sanctity of Life - except, perhaps, fleetingly glimpsed in her eyes, face, as she, the young blonde-haired Polish worker, smiles. Four, five times - more - this week we have looked into each other's eyes as she, I, smiled, touched-but-not-touched, in wordless greeting. Then, such humanity over, we return to our tasks - I, to lift, move, heavy laden objects; she, to her machine. But she is there, in the background, as she works with her sister - quietly, stoically, both toiling as they toil: hard, grafting, as if inured to such a way of life. So they keep their own company - with few words between them; few for others, for they have "little english" and at lunch sit together beside the machine that steals their day, gazing ahead while they eat their meagre food perhaps enwrapped in dreams which are their dreams, bringing perchance some glimmer of hope among the stark noisey brightly-lit bleakness.

This life is grim, grim grim, only saved by such an intimation. No insects, outside, as I sit here, scribbling - except: a few ants, and I gasp-in lungfulls of the cleaner outside air; only a few ants, dithering, backwards,

forwards, over the detritus, as if lost. Toiling, grafting, working - untouched, it seems, by that knowing of Life which a knowing of death may bring.

Such are we here, slaves of a modern life - sure, such toil could bring me the security of some settled home; warmth enough, from fire, to ease the pains that seep now into olding flesh and bones; food enough to keep me well; walls and roof enough to keep clothes dry from rain and turn a chilling wind, away; perhaps another companion-bestfriend-wife... But such a price, to pay: too high a price, it seems, for freedom, Numen, lost.

No time, here - then - to watch the Sun rise on a clear day; no time here - then - to catch the growing Dawn Chorus as it grows, week by week from early to late and later Spring. Nowhere to wander watching clouds form and shade to move as they are moved. No stream to watch as sunlight filters and fractures and water ripples, singing a wordless song. No sounds of an English Summer - flies, darting aimless and aimed; bees, seeking; birds, warning, calling, sparring; no wind breezing as it breezes among tree, hedge, reed, grass and Autumn's late leaf-litter... No natural Time to stand dreaming or sitting as the day passes in moments of memory. No natural Time, of Nature - only that unsettling abstract time of clocking-in-clocks, measuring out the seconds to our death. No, no natural Time, here: only the unnatural unnecessary one of which adds one hour to herald so-called "Summer time" - for even when I, toiling hard during years on Farms, planted, in Spring, or harvested in Autumn - weather-permitting - such "government time" made no difference: work began with Sunrise, to finish, weather-permitting, as the Sun began to set, for thus we followed there in that, our almost vanished world, a different Time to the time of some rootless traffic-fume-filled city.

Yes, freedom is hard, while savings dry and boots are worn as one walks, alone, with that walking that tries to measure out the now almost forgotten pace of a rural life and a rural way of living, bringing back as such slow rhythm and quietness does that connexion to presence the Numen without and within. Yes, freedom is hard while too much toil for another, in the wrong place, lasts." {9}

ooo

{1} The archive is at <https://web.archive.org/web/20101111104858/http://www.davidmyatt.info/> [Accessed August 2022]

{2} Myatt wrote:

"The original message of a revelation or of a spiritual way often seems to become obscured or somehow gets lost over centuries. A loss or obscuration partly due to the reliance on revealed or given texts; partly due to divergent interpretations of such texts, with some interpretations accepted or rejected by those assuming or vested with a religious authority; and partly due to a reliance, by many of the faithful, on translations of such texts." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/exegesis-and-translation-partsone-two.pdf>

{3} Included in Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-selected-ns-writings1/myatt-selected-ns-writings1.pdf>

{4} Myatt's somewhat idiosyncratic translations of these fragments of Heraclitus are: (a) Fragment 1:

"Although this naming and expression [which I explain] exists, human beings tend to ignore it, both before and after they have become aware of it. Yet even though, regarding such naming and expression, I have revealed details of how Physis has been cleaved asunder, some human beings are inexperienced concerning it, fumbling about with words and deeds, just as other human beings, be they interested or just forgetful, are unaware of what they have done."

Text, translation and commentary: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-fragment-1/>

(b) Diogenes Laërtius ix. 7 in context:

ἐκ πυρὸς τὰ πάντα συνεστάναι εἰς τοῦτο ἀναλύεσθαι πάντα δὲ γίνεσθαι καθ' εἰμαρμένην καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐναντιοδρομίας ἡρμόσθαι τὰ ὄντα καὶ πάντα ψυχῶν εἶναι καὶ δαιμόνων πλήρη

"The foundation/base/essence of all beings [ 'things' ] is πυρὸς [pyros] to which they return, with all [of them] by genesis appropriately apportioned [separated into portions] to be bound together again by enantiodromia, and all filled/suffused/vivified with/by ψυχή and Dæmons."

Text, translation and commentary: <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/heraclitus-and-enantiodromia/>

{5} In his 2015 essay *Personal Reflexions On Some Metaphysical Questions*, Myatt wrote:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purview of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited

nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding."

The essay is included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf> [Accessed August 2022]

{6} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/> [Accessed August 2022]

{7} For those of a rational disposition who are inclined to judge matters and individuals for themselves, Myatt's autobiography *Myngath* is available at: <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf> [Accessed August 2022]

{8} Koehler, Daniel. *From Traitor to Zealot: Exploring the Phenomenon of Side-Switching in Extremism and Terrorism*. Cambridge University Press, 2021. pp.153-163.

One inaccuracy among several is that Koehler (p.161) confuses Myatt's fiancée Fran - who committed suicide in 2006 - with Myatt's second wife, Sue, who died of cancer in 1993. Some years after Sue's death Myatt re-married and lived with his third wife near Malvern - in a detached village house, where he was filmed nearby by BBC Panorama in 2000 - until he left that village some months after that filming to move alone to Shropshire to live on a farm. He met Fran several years after that move to Shropshire where he had previously lived from the late 1970s to 1994.

{9} I have retained, at his request, Myatt's idiosyncratic punctuation and spelling.

Myatt's use of the term 'numen' deserves some explanation. He uses it several times in his translations of tracts from the Corpus Hermeticum, particularly in tract III, *ἱερός λόγος*, where he writes in his commentary:

"the meaning of 'numen' here being expressed by what follows: 'numinal and of numinal physis', where by numinal - in this *ἱερός λόγος* - is meant divine not in the specific sense of a monotheistic and Biblical (a masculous) God but in the more general sense of pertaining to a deity or deities, male or female, as in a paganus (and not necessarily patriarchal) polytheism." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

In his scholarly essay *A Note Concerning θεϊότης* - <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2018/03/28/a-note-concerning-θεϊότης/> - he places numen in relation to θεῖος and the Greek text of Romans, 1.20.

---

## David Myatt And The Pinch of Destiny

The interview was conducted, through an intermediary, via the medium of e-mail in 2022 with an anonymous American academic who used the moniker Nameless Therein.

The interview highlights the difference between the contemporary academic approach and Myatt's philosophy of pathei-mathos, based as the former is on extensive quotations from others, and founded as Myatt's philosophy is on pathei-mathos (a learning from personal often hard experiences) and a scholarly appreciation of Greco-Roman culture. Thus, to many detailed questions Myatt responds by referencing such foundations:

"I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires."

"I have no answer to [your] question *What is the Meaning of Myatt?* because all I seem to be is one fallible mortal among so many billions past and present and one who will die soon having already outlived his three score and ten. Someone who has and perhaps vainly tried in some way in the past ten years or so, and in various poems, to record his feelings, his fallible understanding of himself and the world he has passed through and the events and the people he has, or so he believes, learned from. In those past ten or so years my references are usually only the classical authors; or occasionally a poet such as TS Eliot or a composer such as JS Bach because for those years my world, my influences, have been the outdoor world of Nature, my pathei-mathos, the women I have loved and lost, with my only constant companions those classical authors, my memories, and such a poet and such a composer."

o o o o o

Nameless Therein: You have stated that your philosophy of pathei-mathos is expiative. {1 As expressions of that



expiation, you mention that your writings and reclusiveness "do little to offset the deep sadness felt, except in fleeting moments." {2 In your "desire for a numinous non-religious expiation," {3 your life may be said to resemble a kind of secular restoration of the Fall.

Insofar as your non-religious expiation resembles what Wilfred Cantwell Smith describes as faith, involving "man's capacity to perceive, to symbolize, and to live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to his and her life," {4 the "deep sadness felt" about your past is perhaps offset less by what you have learned and more so by who you have become. In this – in the way your own pathei-mathos has shaped you – one can sense sincere atonement. Could you comment on how pathei-mathos can help one "live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to his ... [or] her life"?

David Myatt: I admit I do not presume to know – I do not even now understand – "how pathei-mathos can help one live loyally and richly in terms of a transcendent dimension to someone's life".

All I do know is what I wrote over a decade ago about something which somehow in some ineffable way seemed to personally work for me:

"the so beautiful sound of birdsong in English woods and fields in early May; or perhaps the sight of small cumulus clouds slowly passing beneath the sky of blue in Summer when Sun so warms us that we stop to wipe away the sweat upon our brow; or, perhaps, that so special scent of a meadow field in middle June after rain when Sun, re-emerging from passing stormfull cloud, dries us and our so fragile land, and we are moved – so moved, so still, amid the country silence – that we lie down awhile beside the Hawthorn hedge to feel again this simple English paradise of field, farm, life, and burgeoning birth." {5

But this, such a heritage, such a still so very numinous place, is not an option for so very many around the world that I can only and so fallibly suggest it might possibly be such a Nature in such a place as still exists, and a personal loyal love of partners and of family bound together through personal honour.

NT: On the subject of faith, Wilfred Cantwell Smith notes that "faith is that quality of or available to humankind by which we are characterized as transcending, or are enabled to transcend, the natural order." {6

This points to an interesting disparity you previously highlighted regarding the activities of your extremist decades, which were marked by a desire to "bring-into-being some-thing that ... [you now recognize] would not and could not, in centennial terms (let alone in millennial or cosmic terms) endure." {7

In the desire to "stop or somehow try to control, to shape, the natural flux of change ... [and] to preserve, whatever the cost, what we or others after us might bring-into-being," you noted the underlying belief that you and your associates "would or could do what no one in human history had been able to do: make our presencings immortal, or at least immune to the natural cycle of birth-life-decay-death."8 Having since rejected those beliefs, in addition to the activities and writings of your extremist decades, how would you now reconcile the desire to create enduring works capable of transcending the natural order with a rejection of politics, religion, and violent social activism? {9

DM: Again I have no abstractive, generalized, ideological supra-personal answers. All I have is my feeling, my intuition, my fallible learning that it is a personal loyal love and a very personal honour in the immediacy of the moment which matter.

NT: Could you comment on how to reconcile the tension between the universal application of pathei-mathos to our species across thousands of years of human history on the one hand and the recognition of our own mortality as a human species on the other? In other words, how is pathei-mathos meant to endure according to what you call the "Cosmic Perspective" {10 in light of our own mortality, and particularly without a "religious" dimension that transcends the natural order?

Might pathei-mathos' endurance be immanent rather than transcendent, presenced in our mortality rather than beyond it? And how might this relate to Aeschylus' original sense of πάθει μάθος (pathei-mathos) with respect to "[the immortal Zeus] guiding mortals to reason"? {11

DM: Is there or should there ever be anything which is or which is suggested as a 'universal' or a religious or an 'ideological' supra-personal application or causal abstraction? Something believed or hoped to be enduring?

My own fallible experience is that there is not and perhaps should never be again, since all supra-personal suggestions or applications or abstractions however denoted in my experience and in respect of my classical learning immediately or sooner later are the genesis of hubris and suffering.

Thus and yet again I am returned to a personal loyal love between two people and/or their family and to a very personal honour in the immediacy of the moment.

NT: William James said that religion is "'the individual pinch of destiny' as the individual feels it." {12 James' characterization of religion was largely a response to the question, "What is the character of this universe in which we dwell?" {13 In order to address this question, he noted that one "must go behind the foreground of existence and reach down to that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence, intimate or alien, terrible or amusing, lovable or odious, which in some degree everyone possesses." {14

In "[t]his sense of the world's presence," we become either "strenuous or careless, devout or blasphemous, gloomy or

exultant, about life at large." {15 And our reaction, he says, which is "involuntary and inarticulate and often half unconscious," is the "completest of all our answers" to the above question. {16

In making cosmic meaningful tragedy from the individual to the broader context of our species, it seems that this "pinch" has been present throughout your life and your philosophy despite your "desire for a numinous non-religious expiation" {17 and your view that mainstream religions no longer provide "a satisfactory answer to the question of suffering ... [or of] what may be required for us to consciously change ourselves for the better." {18 In reaching down to "that curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence," how would you describe your reaction to that "sense of the world's presence," and how has that changed over the course of your life?

DM: We human beings especially of the male genus and often because of centuries of so-called "thinking" make matters of existence, Being, and morality seem complicated, and offer our own suggestions as to how matters could or perhaps should be.

But over the course of my life I seem to have learned that the suffering such suggestions cause and the hubris of humans continues. The invention of causal abstractions continues, century after century. And the Cosmos with its billions of galaxies and its perhaps billions of life-habitable planets continues. So, we humans here on Terra Firma are what? Some transient fallible persons sallying forth – and killing, causing suffering – on behalf of some ancient or modern abstraction such as some religious faith or some nation-State or on behalf of some personal instinct we seemingly cannot control?

Simply expressed: there should no longer be an aspiration for a broader supra-personal meaning.

NT: William James' description of religion seems oddly in keeping with what, in paraphrasing Cicero, you have described as the essence of ancient European paganism. {19

Additionally, your characterization of the ancient sense of *pathei-mathos* as wisdom arising from personal suffering {20 also seems in keeping with the Pyrrhonian sense of *ataraxia* (ἀταραξία) or "freedom from worry," {21 which is reached by raising "oneself above a condition of misery and despair" through self-mastery and fortitude. {22 With respect to the ancient question, "How can we keep from suffering?" {23 your life and writings seem to fluctuate between resilience and renunciation. In this, there seems to be an almost Stoic undertone with respect to how the ideas that have shaped your worldview do not resemble "an interesting pastime or even a particular body of knowledge, but ... a way of life." {24 You have mentioned the influence of Marcus Aurelius on your thinking, which may explain that undertone. {25 Looking back, how do you view the Stoic notion of elevating sorrow rather than abolishing it {26 in order to overcome and then meaningfully reshape it in our lives? Does this resilience in the face of tragic renunciation have any bearing on the overarching theme of honor throughout your life?

DM: As ever these days, I am wary of a general term – in this case Stoicism – being applied to describe what a person or some persons wrote or such writings ancient or otherwise.

In this matter before answering a specific question I would have to read critical editions of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and the necessary others, and then undertake my own translations and commentaries with particular attention to what words such as *tempus* and πένθος and εὐδαιμονία in their work may have meant and implied to those writers and their contemporaries and not what is meant or assumed now by such terms as 'time' and 'grief' and 'good fortune'/'happiness'. Such a task would occupy me for perhaps a year if not more. One of many comparisons of interest might be between Seneca's *De Consolatio ad Marciam* and how Antigone is portrayed by Sophocles and Clytemnestra by Aeschylus.

But from previous readings of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and some of the necessary others I would in regard to honour answer in the negative given how I now understand honour as an individual feeling related to the numinous which cannot be abstracted out from a personal moment in the form of some written or aural code, ethical or otherwise, or become a basis for or a part of some -ism or some -ology.

NT: On the subject of religion and the previous question on Stoicism, I am reminded of the Romanian nihilist Emil Cioran's vitriolic but insightful words from his little-known article, "A Bouquet of Heads." Remarking on Christianity and Stoicism in the ancient world, he says the following:

The Greco-Roman twilight deserved a better enemy, a better promise, a better religion. How can you believe even in the shadow of progress when you remember that those Christian fables, with no trouble at all, smothered Stoicism! If Stoicism had been able to grow and spread, to seize hold of the world, man would have come through, or almost. Resignation, made obligatory, would have taught us to endure our suffering with dignity, to silence our voices, to face our Nothingness coldly.... To accuse no one, to stoop neither to sadness, nor joy, nor regret, to reduce our connection with the world to a harmonious play of defeat, to live condemned and serene, never imploring the deity but rather putting him on notice.... That was not possible. Stoicism, overrun from all sides and faithful to its principles, had the elegance to die without a struggle. A religion founds itself on the ruins of wisdom, but the tactics used by religion are scarcely appropriate to wisdom. {27

Many would agree that you have endured suffering with dignity over the course of your life. But rather than founding your legacy on the ruins of wisdom, you appear to have forged an existential crucible from which many now draw inspiration. How would you like to see that inspiration embodied in the lives of those who look up to you? And if those ruins were a monument to the past, what virtues and activities would you like to see take their place?

DM: My answer can possibly be deduced from my previous one. Just as my fallible understanding is that honour cannot be abstracted from a personal moment to become some sort of principle or guide, so my similar fallible understanding is that a person who learns by means of pathei-mathos cannot be or rather should not become such a guide or even an example and certainly should not assume any sort of guiding

NT: In a 2017 interview, you noted that both the Numinous Way and the philosophy of pathei-mathos now seem to you "a rather wordy and a rather egoistic, vainful, attempt to present what I (rightly or wrongly) believed I had learned about myself and the world as a result of various experiences." {28 You add that, in your solitude and now concentrating on your translations, you live "each day as it passes ... unconcerned about what my being – and my relation to Being – is now or perhaps should be." {29 In some respects, your withdrawal into solitude resembles Mother Teresa's confession of feeling a "deep loneliness," having previously confessed that her "own soul ... [remained] in deep darkness [and] desolation" as she began to doubt her faith. {30 In this, there may be an element of truth in what Emil Cioran says of solitude:

"Solitude is not a gift, it is a mission: to rise to it, to take it upon oneself, is to renounce that portion of baseness needed to guarantee the success of any enterprise whatever, religious or otherwise."31 On the other hand, C. S. Lewis' point that "[e]very mode of being in the whole universe contributes to ... [man]; he is a cross-section of being"32 carries some weight. These two tensions additionally seem to resolve in the words of Gregory the Great (540-604), who said that "because man has existence (esse) in common with stones, life with trees, and understanding (discernere) with angels, he is rightly called by the name of the world." {33

The sentiments expressed by all of these figures point to an important concern: In your solitude and your lack of concern with what your being and your relation to Being is now or should be, one senses the danger of also losing concern for your relation to other beings, and specifically to other human beings. In the shadow of commonality you share with those who take inspiration from your work, what do you hope to wager in the eclipse between how they see your life and how they speak your name – perhaps not as the name of the world, but certainly as a name of theirs?

DM: The question of possibly "losing concern for your relation to other beings, and specifically to other human beings" has bothered me and does bother me and the only answer I have is again that of honour in the immediacy of the living moment which seems to me the only numinous exception to 'not interfering in the world' however good one believes one's interference to be.

All this means seems to me to amount to doing what is honourable when personally, in the immediacy of the moment, confronted with someone or some many doing what is dishonourable in relation to another person or persons or to another living being. My intuition is that a person of honour either instinctively knows what is dishonourable or has learned so from personal experience.

NT: In a letter to his brother Henry James during the completion of his great work on the Principles of Psychology, William James said, "I have to forge every sentence in the teeth of irreducible and stubborn facts." {34 In contrast to European science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Alfred North Whitehead notes that James was alluding to a "new tinge to modern minds ... [as] a vehement and passionate interest in the relation of general principles to irreducible and stubborn facts." {35 Whitehead elaborates on this, noting that: All the world over and at all times there have been practical men, absorbed in "irreducible and stubborn facts": all the world over and at all times there have been men of philosophic temperament who have been absorbed in the weaving of general principles. It is this union of passionate interest in the detailed facts with equal devotion to abstract generalisation which forms the novelty in our present society. Previously it had appeared sporadically and as if by chance. This balance of mind has now become part of the tradition which infects cultivated thought. It is the salt which keeps life sweet.

The main business of universities is to transmit this tradition as a widespread inheritance from generation to generation. {36

Whitehead's observance that the wedding of particular facts with abstract generalizations marks a distinct shift from the "disruption of Western Christianity and the rise of modern science" in the sixteenth century {37 to a "new colouring of ways of thought ... [which] had been proceeding slowly for many ages in the European peoples." {38 The new mentality this gave way to "altered the metaphysical presuppositions and the imaginative contents of our minds; so that now the old stimuli provoke a new response," which Whitehead notes was "more important even than the new science and the new technology." {39

Given that this wedding of particular facts with abstraction was in large part responsible for a new way of thinking that shaped the whole of Europe, do you find it problematic that much of your writing has a tendency to be interpreted as pulling this wedding apart or even declaiming a divorce (two examples being the emphasis on individual or particular experience and the negative sense of "causal abstraction")?

DM: A marriage and a pulling apart of or a conflict between what? An idea, an ideal? Another idea? A generalization termed 'Europe', a generalization termed Western Christianity; another one named modern science? Another termed our present society? And so on.

My focus in the past ten or so years has been on the personal and interactions between individuals such as personal love based on a loyalty between individuals and the families that two such individuals can bring-into-being biological or otherwise. Such persons, such interactions, can and do sometimes cause suffering; but is this and has this been on the scale of that caused by ideologies, ideas, ideals, and entities such as codified religions, nations, States, Empires?

Do the achievements of some such nations, States, Empires, of some ideas, ideals, and what has been termed 'science' and 'technology' balance out what suffering they may have caused?

For in my experience it is or it should be a question of balance; of accepting there are limits; of accepting responsibility; of accepting that the personal and such things as love, empathy, compassion, and honour are the essential aspects of that necessary balance, with extremism of whatever type or form the result of the harshness of personal imbalance when love, empathy, compassion, and honour are ignored or rejected or never personally known because some -ism or -ology or some manufactured entity or hatred of some perceived enemy have priority in the life of an individual with our human culture of pathei-mathos also ignored or rejected or never personally known.

Have we as a species in the past experienced in some way and in some place a part of the necessary balance? Possibly, for a while. Do we have a part of such a balance now in any society in the world? Possibly, although some may disagree. Are we as a species learning from our human culture of pathei-mathos with its documentation by means of music, memoirs, poetry, and other arts, of human suffering, human love, tragedy, and loss?

NT: Two-part question. Question one. You have noted that certain forms of abstraction tend to be associated with the masculine and can take on a kind of violence toward muliebral virtues like empathy, compassion, and humility. {40 This can occur, for example, in the masculine "favouring of abstractions and the notion of an idealized duty over empathy and compassion and the muliebral virtues in general," {41 which can lead to forms of extremism.

However, this push against abstraction has resulted in a tendency by many of your readers to identify abstraction with an erroneous or even harmful way of thinking. That identification seems dangerously close to a kind of nominalism or rejection of all universals and abstract objects, {42 which itself may germinate a species of extremism.

I suspect part of this tension may have been influenced by Aristotle and his account of physis (φύσις) or nature, where, in contrast to Plato's Timaeus, "nature is not an abstract, impersonal, 'all-pervading demiurgic force'," {43 but rather an "inner driving force we reference when saying of a natural being: 'That is its nature.'" {44 I am also reminded of the medieval problem of universals, {45 which highlights a debate that spans the work of the Neo-Platonists, pagans such as Plotinus and Porphyry, and medieval Christians such as Augustine and Boethius. {46

With respect to your work, one could argue that the muliebral virtues at the heart of the philosophy of pathei-mathos require a grounding in some sense of abstraction, whether in the transition from individual pathei-mathos to the broader context of collective and sustainable millennial change, in the universal application of pathei-mathos to the human condition, or in the way individual experience is related to other forms of life. Part of the confusion regarding your use of the term "abstraction" may rest on your characterization of the difference between personal knowledge of an individual and reifying that individual according to some ideology or cause. {47 Given that many readers seem to miss the broader context of this distinction, would you mind clarifying what forms of abstraction you view as negative, detrimental, or harmful and what forms you view as productive or even necessary for the cultivation of the muliebral virtues you have described?

Question two. In an interview with you from 2014, {48 your work *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination* is cited with respect to what you identify as the inflexible and often excessive masculine character that goes with extremism.<sup>49</sup> In your view, are there non-extremist contexts where the masculine can find positive, non-violent applications? In what cases might a masculine character compliment "the muliebral virtues of empathy, sensitivity, humility, gentleness, forgiveness, compassion, and the desire to love and be loved" rather than work against them? {50

Conversely, are there cases, however exceptional, where these muliebral virtues could become vices? Though such cases may be few and far between, your description of the difference between personal love and empathy comes to mind, where you noted that "the emotion gendered by personal love can also cause suffering both of the person who loves and in regard to the one loved, especially if there is not a mutual, loyal, equality of love." {51

Do you think there is a danger in this personal asymmetry carrying over to the collective level, as in the case of certain religious ideologies? And much like the important wedding of the particular with the abstract described by Whitehead in the previous question, how might we wed the masculine and the muliebral without inciting these forms of harm?

DM: In relation to masculine and muliebral I understand them as descriptors of personal behaviour and attitudes and how it seems to me that the numinous and thus the honourable tend to be and have tended to be manifest in the world and in our lives. Created abstractions tend toward the supra-personal and tend to cause suffering sooner or later.

An operative expression here is 'tend to be'. Do empathy, compassion, humility, and honour tend toward us not causing suffering? Do ideologies and codified religions tend to – over durations of causal time – cause suffering, harm, and schisms resulting from exegesis?

Does what is often described as the masculine virtue of heroism tend toward suffering by making a or the hero an ideal to be admired and followed, or should it be more correctly described as a balance of both masculine and muliebral if it is understood in the personal sense as the actions of one honourable person?

For another operative expression in my attempts at explanation is 'personal behaviour and attitudes' which being variable and subject to change can perhaps only and sometimes point us toward a certain intuition that might be an uncovering of a possible answer to the question *quid est veritas*. That what is uncovered is only a personal, causally-dependant, experience and a knowing but always dies and yet can return to be rediscovered yet again by others.

Given my hubriatic past and the suffering I have personally caused by championing this or that ideology or this or that religion or this or that abstraction I am all too fallible, all too prone to making mistakes so perhaps I could be wrong regarding this and other matters.

NT: In addition to expiation and remorse, much of your work conveys an overtone of regret. In your recent writings, this can be sensed acutely in the opening sections of "A Vagabond in Exile from the Gods," to cite one example. How have you come to terms with what you now view as mistakes of the past in terms of your legacy to the future and its influence on the world? Additionally, in contrast to the overtones of regret, the desire for forgiveness seems to be a recurrent undertone throughout your writing. Against the sullied public and the lies that your opponents continue to spread about you, will you find the courage to forgive yourself? In reconciling the pain of the past with its shadow of regret, what do you hope to see in the dawning of the future, and what enduring works do you hope to leave for future generations in the brave valence of tomorrow?

DM: In regard to regret for having caused suffering to others through both selfishness and adherence to various -isms or -ologies, the personal lamentation derived and derives from acknowledging my suffering-causing mistakes and from what I hope is an understanding of our human physis and an understanding of the harshness of extremism. As for forgiveness, who or what can forgive those who have caused suffering? In many cultural traditions it was of course the person or persons who were directly harmed or their relatives. In Christian, Islamic and Judaic tradition it is God/Allah.

But the impersonal nature of many suffering-causing extremist deeds and of many criminal justice systems often means there are no living victims or relatives to directly offer forgiveness even should they desire to do so, which would probably be unlikely given the harshness, intractability, the fanatical hatred, of so many extremists.

While there are expiatory means in the Christian, Islamic and Judaic traditions, if one does not or no longer believes in God/Allah then there can be no forgiveness. Thus, for me as mentioned in some of my essays, my weltanschauung of pathemathos, such answers as these, my many autobiographical effusions, are my attempts at expiation.

NT: Before one can derive wisdom from meaningful suffering it seems that one must first constitute the world meaningful. Deriving meaning from the world and constituting it in turn both rest on the way we interpret the world and the framework of interpretation we have at our disposal. I think many individuals today are unaware of the disparity between the framework of interpretation we had at our disposal in ages past and the framework of interpretation that distinctly characterizes modernity. In some respects, the Hellenic vitality of your philosophy risks becoming lost in the "transliteration" from the individual to modernity when interpreted without this frame of reference. In an attempt to sustain that vitality, I think the following summary by Thomas Howard regarding what he calls "The Old Myth and the New" frames this well:

There were some ages in Western history that have occasionally been called Dark. They were dark, it is said, because in them learning declined, and progress paused, and men labored under the pall of belief. A cause-effect relationship is frequently felt to exist between the pause and the belief. Men believed in things like the Last Judgment and fiery torment. They believed that demented people had devils in them, and that disease was a plague from heaven. They believed that they had souls, and that what they did in this life had some bearing on the way in which they would finally experience reality.

They believed in portents and charms and talismans. And they believed that God was in heaven and Beelzebub in hell and that the Holy Ghost had impregnated the Virgin Mary and that the earth and sky were full of angelic and demonic conflict. Altogether, life was very weighty, and there was no telling what might lie behind things. The ages were, as I say, dark.

Then the light came. It was the light that has lighted us men into a new age. Charms, angels, devils, plagues, and parthenogenesis have fled from the glare into the crannies of memory. In their place have come coal mining and  $E = mc^2$  and plastic and group dynamics and napalm and urban renewal and rapid transit. Men were freed from the fear of the Last Judgment; it was felt to be more bracing to face Nothing than to face the Tribunal. They were freed from worry about getting their souls into God's heaven by the discovery that they had no souls and that God had no heaven. They were freed from the terror of devils and plagues by the knowledge that the thing that was making them scream and foam was not an imp but only their own inability to cope, and that the thing that was clawing out their entrails was not divine wrath but only cancer. Altogether, life became much more livable since it was clear that in fact nothing lay behind things. The age was called enlightened.

The myth sovereign in the old age was that everything means everything. The myth sovereign in the new is that nothing means anything. {52

With respect to Howard's description of "the myth sovereign in the old age" and "the myth sovereign in the new," where do you situate your own "paganus weltanschauung" and how do you reconcile it against the modern view that "nothing means anything"?

DM: I do not situate my weltanschauung anywhere in terms defined or believed or discussed by others, ancient or modern, because it is just my weltanschauung, born from various experiences and the loss of loved ones, and nurtured by working and living on a farm in England, by solitary walks along a sea-shore and in the hills and deciduous woods of English Shires.

NT: In another article, I have cited Pope Benedict XVI's comments regarding the topic of violent religious conversion. Recalling a dialogue between "the erudite Byzantine emperor Manuel II Paleologus and an educated Persian on the

subject of Christianity and Islam," {53 the Pope recounts how:

The emperor, after having expressed himself so forcefully, goes on to explain in detail the reasons why spreading the faith through violence is something unreasonable.

Violence is incompatible with the nature of God and the nature of the soul. "God," he says, "is not pleased by blood – and not acting reasonably (σὺν λόγῳ) is contrary to God's nature. Faith is born of the soul, not the body. Whoever would lead someone to faith needs the ability to speak well and to reason properly, without violence and threats. . To convince a reasonable soul, one does not need a strong arm, or weapons of any kind, or any other means of threatening a person with death..." {54

Having long-since rejected Muslim extremism and having had a first-hand account of it for ten years as a radical Muslim, I think the Pope's framing of the aforesaid dialogue finds an acute expression in your current views on the issue. In "Understanding and Countering Muslim Extremism," you describe two aims that typically motivate Muslim extremism – a supra-personal one and a personal one – which you note are "inextricably entwined." {55

You additionally note that "one effective way to counter Muslim extremism is for Muslims themselves to, using Quran and Sunnah, counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by the extremists," thereby pointing to "the humanity that is at the heart of Islam; a humanity so evident in the millions of Muslims ... world-wide." {56

Speaking to that humanity – and more specifically to the humility you cite {57 – how do you now view the spreading of faith through violence with respect to its incompatibility with the nature of God and the nature of the soul described by emperor Manuel II Paleologus? Additionally, if the supra-personal and personal aims that motivate this form of extremism are intertwined, how might we ward against them in their many variations within society and within our own lives?

DM: It seems to me that there are difficult and long-standing questions in relation to religions which wholly or in part rely on texts as the Christian, Islamic, Judaic and Buddhist traditions have done. Questions of exegesis and the different interpretations which often result.

Thus, even if as I wrote in the essay you refer to that one way – not the only way – in regard to events such as 9/11 and 7/7 is for Muslims themselves using Quran and Sunnah to counter the harsh interpretation of Islam by others, that may not prevent such harsh interpretations now or in the future given the reliance on texts with their inevitable exegesis.

In another essay I compared the Shia and the Sunna traditions noting that the Shia tradition of Taqlid seemed to me to preclude exegesis by those scholarly unqualified to do so. I suggested that this might explain why the Shia tradition has:

"no such thing as modern independent extremist Shia groups who indiscriminately target and kill the kuffar ('infidels') in Western lands or elsewhere, or who fly aeroplanes into buildings or who blow themselves up in order to kill 'infidels'. For Shia mujtahidun have given rulings in respect of such things." {58

This should lead to difficult questions for not only groups such as ad-Dawlah al-Islamiyah (commonly known as Islamic State) and their followers who regularly target and kill Shia Muslims but also for Western allies of Saudi Arabia who have for decades imposed sanctions on Iran and who support a conflict in Yemen in which Shia Muslims have been killed in their thousands and Shia children starved to death.

How many in the West even know what these difficult questions are? Not only in relation to Shia Muslims but in relation to exegesis of Christian texts such as The Gospels? To in some minor way draw attention to such questions I began a translation of and writing a commentary on The Gospel According To John and have so far for various personal reasons only managed to make public chapters one to five, available at <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/10/gospel-of-john-1-5.pdf>

NT: In your autobiography, Myngath, you mention an interest in chess in your youth. In fact, you mention being one of the only competitors to have drawn against a visiting Grandmaster in a simultaneous display at the Singapore Polytechnic as a young man. {59 As a chess player, I would be remiss not to ask: do you still have the recorded chess notation for that match? Additionally, do you still play chess? And did you find anything applicable or of value with respect to the lessons you learned in your study of the game and your subsequent study of martial arts?

DM: In regard to the Chess game in Singapore, I do not any longer have the 'descriptive' notation of the game, but the results of the tournament were briefly together with my surname mentioned in a local newspaper – it may have been The Straits Times – and I hunched over a Chess board fleeting appeared in a local TV newsreel of the event.

I lost interest in Chess when, living in Blighty in 1968, I first met Colin Jordan and became a National-Socialist activist in his newly formed British Movement.

NT: In one of your early relationships as a young man, you mention that you and your female companion once spent hours listening to jazz at a small club, noting that "she was a Jazz aficionado and very knowledgeable about that genre." {60 Do you recall what artists or songs you two enjoyed listening to at the time, and do you enjoy the genre? Additionally, are there other genres, artists, or songs of special significance for you that you would care to mention? You have noted that classical music has played an important role in your life, and I am curious to hear more about your musical influences.

DM: Being a young man in love with a lady who was Jazz aficionado I did for a while try to share her interest in and enthusiasm for such music but failed, given my interest in and love of classical music. Which interest began when as a young boy in a private – Whites-only – school in Africa our music teacher played our class a Long Playing record of music by JS Bach performed by Segovia. It was transformative.

NT: I doubt I am alone in feeling that your poetry reveals something deeply moving about the way you and your worldview have transformed over the course of your life. I find the poems in *One Exquisite Silence* particularly moving. Would you care to provide any additional background regarding the circumstances that led to the composition of any of these poems? I am especial y interested in "Travelling," which affects me intensely at this stage of my life.

DM: The poem *One Exquisite Silence* was composed not long after I met and fell in love with a lady who worked on a commercial (wholesale) plant nursery; while the Travelling poem was composed not long after I left Leeds (and my violent National-Socialist activism) in 1974 to wander the English countryside for a while as a vagabond, as was the poem *Summer Days Walking Roads*. The poem titled *Relict* was composed during a visit to a rather neglected cemetery when in 1976 I was travelling around and staying in various monasteries in the United Kingdom with a view to becoming a Catholic monk. The poem titled *Wine* was composed in Spain in the early 1970's, before I moved to Leeds, during another period when I was wandering around wondering what to do with my life.

NT: Martin Heidegger revived one of the most important questions in the Western philosophical tradition: what is the meaning of Being? This question set the philosophical tradition in motion all the way back to the ancient Greeks. At one level, the question points to the fact that we general y operate through an unclarified pre-comprehension of what we mean by "exist," or what we mean by "this is" versus "this is not," where for the ancient Greeks Being was equated with ongoing or constant presence. At a deeper level, it points to an important interpretive dynamic regarding how we are to understand the type of being we are, the one who asks the question and for whom the question is an issue.

Much like Heidegger's question, there are many theories regarding how to interpret the meaning of your life. Sadly, all of these have a tendency to reduce the ideas and ideals that motivated your life's narrative to deeds that you have long-since denounced and atoned for.

Put another way, many are concerned with the details of your life without being equipped to take seriously the ideas that have shaped it. Given that your philosophy is not just a collection of ideas but a mode of living, this presents two problems. The first concerns the philosophy of pathei-mathos, where the way one interprets his or her experiences through the lens of that philosophy is cal ed into question when one is not equipped to address or interpret the meaning of the philosophy itself. In that case, there is often an asymmetry between the vital experience needed to understand the philosophy and the framework needed to interpret those experiences, where the two eventual y disconnect or fail to connect at all. The second problem concerns the attempt by others to interpret your life without first being equipped to interpret their own. We have seen this time and time again with respect to your opponents, in the media, and even among those who take inspiration from your life and work. I would thus like to conclude with one final question, returning us, as is so often the case, to where we began: what is the meaning of David Myatt?

DM: I have no answer to the question "What is the Meaning of Myatt?" because all I seem to be is one fallible mortal among so many billions past and present and one who will die soon having already outlived his three score and ten. Someone who has and perhaps vainly tried in some way in the past ten years or so, and in various poems, to record his feelings, his fallible understanding of himself and the world he has passed through and the events and the people he has, or so he believes, learned from.

In those past ten or so years my references are usually only the classical authors; or occasionally a poet such as TS Eliot or a composer such as JS Bach because for those years my world, my influences, have been the outdoor world of Nature, my pathei-mathos, the women I have loved and lost, with my only constant companions those classical authors, my memories, and such a poet and such a composer.

27.iv.22

Notes

1 David Myatt, "Some Questions for DWM (March 2014)," David Myatt – Πάθει Μάθος, May 2014, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-questions-may2014.html>.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *Faith and Belief: The Difference Between Them* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 1998), 141.

5 <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2010/05/02/rain-following-weeks-of-warmful-april-sun/>

6 Smith, *Faith and Belief*, 142.

7 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.



10 Ibid.

11 David Myatt, "I. Pathei-Mathos as Authority and Way," in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, 5th ed. (CreateSpace, 2018), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/numinous-way-pathei-mathos.pdf>.

12 Clifford Geertz, "The Pinch of Destiny: Religion as Experience, Meaning, Identity, Power," chap. 8 in *Available Light: Anthropological Reflections on Philosophical Topics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 167. See William James, *Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902; New York: Routledge, 2002), 386. Citations refer to the Routledge edition.

13 James, *Varieties*, 33.

14 Ibid., 32.

15 Ibid., 32-33.

16 Ibid., 33.

17 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

18 David Myatt, "Some Questions for DWM, 2017," *David Myatt: Learning from Adversity; a Rejection of Extremism*, 2017, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/dwm-questions-2017-v1b.pdf>.

19 See Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017": "an apprehension of the complete unity (a cosmic order, κόσμος, mundus) beyond the apparent parts of that unity, together with the perceivance that we mortals – albeit a mere and fallible part of the unity – have been gifted with our existence so that we may perceive and understand this unity, and, having so perceived, may ourselves seek to be whole, and thus become as balanced (perfectus), as harmonious, as the unity itself."

20 Myatt, "Authority and Way."

21 Richard Bett, "Pyrrho," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, updated October 23, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/pyrrho/>.

22 Pascal Massie, "Ataraxia: Tranquility at the End," in *A Companion to Ancient Philosophy*, eds. Sean D. Kirkland and Eric Sanday (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 246.

23 Emil Cioran, "A Bouquet of Heads," *The Hudson Review* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1962-1963): 492.

24 Dirk Baltzly, "Stoicism," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, updated April 10, 2018, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stoicism/>.

25 Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

26 Massie, "Ataraxia," 251.

27 Cioran, "Bouquet," 495-96.

28 Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

29 Ibid.

30 Mother Teresa, "My Own Soul Remains in Deep Darkness," in *Mother Teresa, Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*, ed. Brian Kolodiejchuk (New York: Doubleday, 2007).

31 Cioran, "Bouquet," 496.

32 C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image: An Introduction to Medieval and Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 153.

33 Quoted in Lewis, *Discarded Image*, 153.

34 Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: Pelican Mentor Books, 1948), 2-3.

35 Whitehead, *Modern World*, 3.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid., 1.

38 Ibid., 2.

39 Ibid.

40 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."



41 Ibid.

42 Gonzalo Rodriguez-Pereyra, "Nominalism in Metaphysics," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated April 1, 2015, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nominalism-metaphysics/>.

43 Marjolein Oele, "Aristotle on Physis: Analyzing the Inner Ambiguities and Transgression of Nature," in A Companion to Ancient Philosophy, eds. Sean D. Kirkland and Eric Sanday (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2018), 162.

44 Oele, "Aristotle on Physis," 162.

45 Gyula Klima, "The Medieval Problem of Universals," Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, updated February 27, 2022, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/universals-medieval/>.

46 Ibid.

47 See, for example, David Myatt, "Understanding and Countering Muslim Extremism," David Myatt – Πάθει Μάθος, 2015, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/muslim-extremism.html>.

48 Myatt, "Some Questions (March 2014)."

49 See David Myatt, "The Masculous Extremist," in Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination (CreateSpace, 2013), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/muslim-extremism.html>.

50 Ibid.

51 Myatt, "Some Questions, 2017."

52 Thomas Howard, "The Old Myth and the New," chap. 1 in Chance or the Dance? A Critique of Modern Secularism (1969; repr., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001).

53 Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections" (speech, Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg, Bavaria, Germany, September 12, 2006). The speech can be accessed here: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20060912\\_university-regensburg.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2006/september/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20060912_university-regensburg.html).

54 Ibid.

55 Myatt, "Countering Muslim Extremism."

56 Ibid.

57 Ibid.

58 <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/dwm-questions-2015.pdf> 59 David Myatt, "Far East," in Myngath: Some Recollections of a Wyrdful and Extremist Life (CreateSpace, 2013), <https://www.davidmyatt.info/david-myatt-myingath.pdf>.

60 Myatt, "Toward First Love," in Myngath.

---

## Addendum

### Misunderstanding Denotata In Myatt's Philosophy Of Pathei-Mathos

#### A Particular Perceivation

A certain misunderstanding of David Myatt's weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos seems to have arisen based on Myatt's use of terms such as acausal, abstractions, and denotatum {1} which does not seem to take into account matters such as the following:

1. That Myatt's weltanschauung was developed and refined over a period of some years (c.2011-2017) and was based primarily on his outré experiences over some four decades, which refinement led him to write in 2022 that

"my weltanschauung is just my weltanschauung; representing my attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology." {2}

In effect, his weltanschauung of Pathei-Mathos is a mystical perceivation and not an academic philosophy. {3}

2. That his classification of his insights using terminology such as ontology, epistemology, and ethics - as in for example his statement that "the ontology of beings [...] is often obscured by denotatum and by abstractions, both of which conceal physis" {4} - is only a temporary guide for readers since his focus is primarily on empathy and pathei-

mathos as a means to knowing, both of which are personal, of the immediate moment, and which knowing, as he writes many times, cannot be extracted out from that personal experiencing to form the basis for anything supra-personal be it a denotata or some -ism or some -ology. {5}

That is, ontology itself is an abstraction, a denotatum, which empathy and pathei-mathos take us beyond. In this respect a simile might be Wittgenstein's 'ladder'.

3. That what applies to terminology such as ontology applies to his use of the acausal and his division of our physis, following his understanding of the Corpus Hermeticum, into masculous and muliebral. That they are also useful denotata to explain what is as it now is and has been but are ultimately discarded by the wordless knowing of empathy and pathei-mathos.

4. That his comparisons and examples derived from ancient Greek texts and philosophy - most of which he cites in Greek and provides his own translations - are of the insights of some others with which he finds some correlation with his own insights, eschewing as he does in his iconoclasm and resonance with Greco-Roman culture the modern practice in academia of citing works by philosophers of the past few centuries and more recent texts by academics.

### **The Mysticism Of Mr Myatt**

The statement by Myatt, quoted above, that his weltanschauung is his

"attempt to apprehend the physis of human beings; to understand the causes of suffering and how suffering can be alleviated; and understand the nature of the numinous and what it means and meant, and thus whether the numinous is embodied in theos, however understood, or in human virtues such as compassion, empathy and honour which thus might obviate the need for a belief in something supra-personal be that theos or some -ism or some -ology," {2}

is a succinct description of his mysticism; that is, of his personal perceivation of what is conventionally termed 'Reality', of Being and of beings. Which perceivation is of the numinous capable of apprehension, sans denotata, by means of empathy and pathei-mathos, obviating the need for theos (a supreme divinity) and for theoi (the divinities of various ancient religions, pagan and otherwise) and obviating the need for not only ideologies of whatever kind but for religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism which rely on the interpretation, the exegesis, of some text or texts. {6}

For Myatt, this apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals through the compassion, humility, and tolerance born of empathy and through the fairness, the reasonableness, of personal honour.

As noted in *Conspectus of The Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, empathy:

"inclines a person toward certain virtues; toward a particular type of personal character; and disinclines them toward doing what is bad, what is unfair; what is harsh and unfeeling; what intentionally causes or contributes to suffering. For empathy enables us to *directly perceive*, to sense, the φύσις (the physis, the nature or character) of human beings and other living beings, involving as empathy does a translocation of ourselves and thus a knowing-of another living-being as that living-being is, without presumptions and sans all ideations, all projections." [My emphasis] {7}

Furthermore, empathy is inextricably linked to pathei-mathos {8} and that there is what Myatt terms a 'local horizon' to empathy:

"The 'local horizon of empathy' is a natural consequence of my understanding of empathy as a human faculty, albeit a faculty that is still quite underdeveloped. For what empathy provides - or can provide - is a very personal wordless knowing in the immediacy-of-the-living-moment. Thus empathy inclines us as individuals to appreciate that what is beyond the purveu {9} of our empathy - beyond our personal empathic knowing of others, beyond our knowledge and our experience, beyond the limited (local) range of our empathy and that personal (local) knowledge of ourselves which pathei-mathos reveals - is something we rationally, we humbly, accept we do not know and so cannot judge or form a reasonable, a fair, a balanced, opinion about. For empathy, like pathei-mathos, lives within us; manifesting, as both empathy and pathei-mathos do, the always limited nature, the horizon, of our own knowledge and understanding." {10}

"[a]s a personal human faculty empathy has a personal horizon and thus cannot be extrapolated from such a personal knowing into some-thing supra-personal be this some-thing denotata, including an ἰδέα/εἶδος, or an axiom (ἀρχή) or a source (αἴτιος) for some 'revelation' or ideology or similar manifestations constructed by and dependent on appellation." {11}

In regard to the numinous Myatt writes:

"In contrast to Otto et al, my understanding of the numinous is that it is primarily a perceivation, not a personal emotion or feeling, not a mysterium, and not an idea in the sense of Plato's εἶδος and thus is not similar to Kant's concept of a priori. As a perceivation, while it includes an apprehension of what is often referred to as 'the divine', 'the holy' - and sometimes thus is an apprehension of theos or theoi - it is not limited to such apprehensions, since as in the past it is often an intimation of, an intuition concerning, the natural balance of ψυχή; a balance which ὕβρις upsets. This natural balance - our being as human beings - is

or can be manifest to us in or by what is harmonious, or what reminds us of what is harmonious and beautiful." {12}

Which brings us to what seems to be a neglected aspect of his weltanschauung: the natural balance, harmony, ἁρμονία, for which he often uses the Taoist-derived term wu-wei which he defines as being "used in my philosophy of pathei-mathos to refer to a personal 'letting-be' - a non-interference - deriving from humility." {13} That is, from the humility revealed by empathy.

His 2018 essay *Towards Understanding Ancestral Culture* elaborates on this notion of balance where he provides an example not only from Ancient Greece but from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum, and from Ficini's *De Vita Coelitus Comparanda*, written in Latin and published in 1489,

"Correctly understood, Δίκη - and δίκη in general - represents the natural and the necessary balance manifest in ἁρμονία (harmony) and thus not only in τὸ καλόν (the beautiful) but also in the Cosmic Order, κόσμος, with ourselves as human beings (at least when unaffected by hubris) a microcosmic re-presentation of such balance, κόσμον δὲ θείου σώματος κατέπεμψε τὸν ἄνθρωπον. A sentiment re-expressed centuries later by Marsilii Ficini: Quomodo per inferiora superioribus exposita deducantur superiora, et per mundanas materias mundana potissimum dona, 'How, when what is lower is touched by what is higher, the higher is cosmically presenced therein and thus gifted because cosmically aligned'.

This understanding and appreciation of ἁρμονία and of κόσμος and of ourselves as a microcosm is perhaps most evident in the Greek phrase καλὸς κάγαθός, describing as it does those who are balanced within themselves, who - manifesting τὸ καλόν and τὸ ἀγαθόν - comport themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner." {14}

Which ancient notion of καλὸς κάγαθός he mentions in his two 2017 monographs *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos* and *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua* {15} and which comportment succinctly describes how his weltanschauung could be manifest in the world.

### **Gentlemanly And Lady-like Behaviour**

As described earlier, Myatt's mystical apprehension of the numinous is manifest in the personal behaviour of individuals and this behaviour amounts to an individual comporting themselves in a gentlemanly or lady-like manner; a comportment which has a long history in European culture from the idealized medieval chivalry of Morte Arthure to fictional Regency characters such as Mr Darcy, Elizabeth Bennet, Colonel Brandon, and Elinor Dashwood, to the 1940s Clive Wynne-Candy and Theo Kretschmar-Schuldorff.

In his 2014 essay *The Consolation Of A Viator*, Myatt indirectly references the character of Mr Darcy:

"For most of my life - and to paraphrase what someone once wrote - I have been a selfish being, prideful and conceited, and would still be so were it not for the suicide of a woman I loved." {16}

In the final paragraph of his autobiography *Myngath* he concludes that "a shared, a loyal, love between two people is the most beautiful, the most numinous, the most valuable thing of all." {17}

Such personal sentiments ground, and in my view express the essence of, his weltanschauung and have apparently been somewhat neglected in discussions of Myatt's 'philosophy' of pathei-mathos. For it is not an academic philosophy divorced from the realities of human life but the life-experience of someone who, learning from both diverse experiences and decades of scholarly study, has distilled that learning into the understanding that in order to presence the numinous we do not need religions or any -ism or -ology or abstractions but have only to behave in a certain cultured way: with manners, fairness, honour, humility, and compassion.

Which attributes of personal character are, to use Myatt's term, descriptors not abstractions:

"A descriptor is a word, a term, used to describe some-thing which exists and which is personally observed, or is discovered, by means of our senses (including the faculty of empathy)." {13}

Hence why Myatt aptly describes his 'philosophy' as a "mystical individualistic numinous way," and as "the way of striving to cultivate, striving to live by, the virtues of humility, empathy, compassion, honour, non-interference, and self-restraint. A very individual way..." {18}

Morena Kapisiris  
June 2022

oooooo

{1} It should be noted that in many of his writings Myatt often idiosyncratically uses *denotatum* as an Anglicized term for both singular and plural instances. However, I shall use denotata for the plural and denotatum for the singular.

{2} *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/05/dwm-questions-may-22.pdf>

{3} We have appropriated the term 'perceiveration' from Myatt's translations of and commentaries on tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum where he explains that he uses it to translate the Greek term νοῦς in place of the conventional translation 'mind', explaining his reasons in his article *Concerning ἀγαθός and νοῦς in the Corpus Hermeticum* -

<https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/03/24/concerning-ἀγαθός-and-voũç-in-the-corpus-hermeticum/> - and in his commentary on v.2 of the Poemandres tractate where he describes perceivance as:

"a particular type of astute awareness, as of one's surroundings, of one's self, and as in understanding ('reading') a situation often in an instinctive way. Thus, what is not meant is some-thing termed 'mind' (or some faculty thereof), distinguished as this abstract 'thing' termed 'mind' has often been from another entity termed the body." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{4} *Towards Understanding Physis*. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{5} See for example *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, 2014, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{6} In many of his writings Myatt has explained that the need for and practice of exegesis leads to suffering through reliance on a particular interpretation and through the conflict of competing interpretations which can lead to accusations of 'heresy'. See for example (i) the 2017 text *The Way Of Jesus of Nazareth: A Question Of Hermeneutics?* <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2017/09/30/the-way-of-jesus-of-nazareth/> and (ii) the 2019 text *Two Metaphysical Contradictions Of The Modern West* which is included in his text *In Defence Of The Roman Catholic Church*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2019/02/in-defence-rc-1.pdf> In his 2018 essay *From Mythoi To Empathy* - included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition - he wrote that the local horizon of empathy

"and the fact that empathy is a human faculty mean that the apprehension is wordless and personal and cannot be extrapolated beyond, or abstracted out from, the individual without losing some or all of its numinosity since the process of denotatum - of abstraction - devolves around the meanings assigned to words, terms, and names, and which meanings can and do vary over causal time and may be (mis)interpreted by others often on the basis of some idea, or theory, or on some comparative exegesis. It therefore follows that the numinous cannot be codified and that numinosity cannot be adequately, fully, presenced by anything doctrinal or which is organized beyond a small, a localized, and thus personal level; and that all such a supra-local organization can ever hope to do at best is provide a fallible intimation of the numinous, or perhaps some practical means to help others toward individually apprehending the numinous for themselves." <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{7} included in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, op.cit.

{8} *The Mystic Philosophy Of David Myatt*, third edition, 2021, p.5. <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2021/09/myatt-philosophy-third-edition.pdf>

In his *Some Questions For DWM*, 2022, Myatt writes that the third edition of *The Mystic Philosophy* provides "a reasonably comprehensive overview" of his weltanschauung.

{9} As often, Myatt uses an alternative spelling: here *purveu* (from Middle English) instead of the now conventional 'purview'. See *On Idiosyncratic Capitalization and Spelling*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/on-idiosyncratic-capitalization-and-spelling/>

{10} Included in *Sarigthersa*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/dwmyatt-sarigthersa-v7.pdf>

{11} *Numinosity, Denotata, Empathy, And The Hermetic Tradition*, 2022, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/2022/03/17/numinosity-denotata-empathy-and-the-hermetic-tradition/>

{12} *From Mythoi To Empathy*, 2018. Included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, fifth edition, 2018, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/numinous-way-v5c-print.pdf>

{13} *Vocabulary of the Philosophy of Pathei-Mathos*, in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit.

{14} The essay is included as an appendix in *The Numinous Way of Pathei-Mathos*, op.cit. Myatt translates the quotation from Tractate IV:2 of the Corpus Hermeticum as "A cosmos of the divine body sent down as human beings," writing in his commentary:

"That is, human beings re-present, presence, the 'divine body' and are, of themselves, a reflection of the cosmic order itself. This, and the preceding line, express a fundamental part of ancient and Renaissance hermeticism: human beings as a microcosm of the cosmic order and the divine." *Corpus Hermeticum: Eight Tractates*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eight-tractates-v2-print.pdf>

{15} (i) *Classical Paganism And The Christian Ethos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/classical-paganism-v2-print.pdf> (ii) *Tu Es Diaboli Ianua*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/tua-es-diaboli-ianua.pdf>

{16} The essay is included in *One Vagabond In Exile From The Gods*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2014/10/one-vagabond-pathei-mathos.pdf>

{17} *Myngath*, 2013, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myngath.pdf>

## David Myatt, Australian Interview, 2023

The interview was with an Australian-based investigative journalist of Serbian descent known by his moniker 'Interzone' who was also a former convert to Islam. We include as a relevant addendum Myatt's text *Analysing National Socialism* where he writes:

"There is thus, based on applying the moral criteria of The Numinous Way, a complete rejection by me of National-Socialism – of whatever kind – and an understanding of Hitler as a flawed individual who caused great suffering and whose actions and policies were dishonourable and immoral."

ooooooo

### Part One

§ I know you supported the Taliban, and I wish to ask where did you go? Who did you meet? How long were you there? If vague answers must be made for security reasons I understand.

Yes I did support the Taliban during my Muslim years, with one of my writings in support of them - *The Significance of the Taliban for the Muslim Ummah* - apparently found by the CIA in the possession of Osama bin Laden following his killing by US Navy Seals in the Abbottabad compound in 2011. [1]

My travels in Muslim lands following my reversion in 1998 were briefly mentioned by Mark Weitzmann in a 2010 NATO publication [2] with one such travel summarized in my somewhat heretical text *Reflections on Islamic Travels* dated 2 Jumaada Al-Thaani 1424. Other than this I have as you anticipated no further comment to make.

§ It would not surprise me if you have had to quieten yourself by pressure from MI6, or use foreign intelligence agency's in the past.

My only overt contact with such agencies was following my arrest by Special Branch (SO12 as it then was, now part of SO15) in 1998 during one of several amiable meetings and conversations with an SO12 officer at which meeting another somewhat enigmatic person was present who I assumed was either MI5 or MI6. My assumption is and was that such agencies had me - have me? - under covert surveillance from at least 1997 during my involvement with Combat 18.

§ I wish to know your perspective of the current Taliban, as for the most part they consist of many original Taliban members.

My now "above Time" perspective is mostly the one I wrote about in that aforementioned writing but modified with the riders 'may be' and 'on balance': that, for Muslims, they may represent, on balance, the spiritual principle of Zuhd in dunya (zuhd ad-dunya) which principle of detachment from or a concern with material things is it seems alien to some in the modern materialistic West although kept alive by others in various spiritual forms and perhaps even in those who espouse certain environmental concerns about what the modern West has done and is doing in respect of Nature. In regard to spiritual forms I am reminded, in respect of Christianity, of Julian of Norwich, George Fox, and William Penn.

With "on balance" for (i) it seems that sometimes - but not always - there may be or may have been an excess of zeal by some and (ii) there is the question of Ijma regarding their interpretation of Quran and Sunnah, which consensus, according to my understanding, they did not and currently do not have possibly because they did not have time to develop and most certainly now, post-occupation, cannot yet develop an Emirate.

§ I know this is not confirmed: that you have "renounced Islam and all forms of Extremism".

What is or would be acceptable as confirmation? For myself, I can only suggest a reading of my post-2012 writings, such as *Understanding And Rejecting Extremism*, [3] and what I endeavoured to express in my three 2022 interviews. [4]

ooo

### Part Two

§ Regarding Combat 18. When you left, especially becoming more deeply involved in Islam, were there ever any reprisals towards you?

No. Possibly because of two things. I kept certain channels of communication open particularly concerning Reichsfolk,

and, in anticipation of a forthcoming criminal trial following my arrest in 1998 by SO12, I was preparing a defence since their criminal investigation was ongoing only ending in the Summer of 2001 when I released from my bail after it was found that there was "insufficient evidence" to bring me to trial.

This preparation included having some of my National-Socialist writings re-issued, one of which was the essay *Why National-Socialism is Not Racist*, and another *The Theology Of National-Socialism: An Examination of National-Socialism, Christianity and Islam*, in which I had written,

Honour demands that we treat people, regardless of their race, their culture, their religion, their 'political views' with fairness and respect. That is, honour demands that we have manners and are polite: that we strive to act with nobility of character; that we judge people by their deeds and in particular by how they act toward us [...] It really is about time that we who uphold the noble way of life which is National-Socialism lived according to our own ethics and began to explain, openly and in clear words, the noble reality of National-Socialism. No matter how dire our situation may be, or appears to be, and no matter how many non-Aryans may live in what were once our own nations, we must hold fast to our own ethics and not allow ourselves be tricked into accepting the Zionist version of 'National Socialism' with its hate-filled, irrational, Hollywood 'nazis'. [5]

It was during this time that I wrote *The Question of National-Socialism, Racism and Tolerance* [6] which led me later that year (2001) to conceive a practical plan to try and bring National-Socialists and Muslims together in order to combat, in various ways, what I considered were our mutual enemies. In furtherance of which I wrote tracts such as the multipart *The National-Socialist Guide to Understanding Islam*, in which I broached the subject of 'martyrdom operations' by Muslims, the last edition of which 'guide' was published in 1424 AH. [6]

§ It seems that you and the O9A have been targeted as the "connection" between all these Neo-Nazi terrorist groups. It seems they have decided to choose you along with the O9A as the main driving force of these organisations. Allowing governments to use the O9A like they are trying to do in Australia, to by proxy drag in tens of Neo-Nazi and far-right groups into being designated as terrorist organisations. Do you feel this is the case?

This is an interesting question which I believe deserves a detailed reply especially as it links to one of the themes you are researching.

My personal perception is that 'the Establishment', of which anti-fascist groups such as 'Hope Not Hate' are now part of, have for several years been concerned about how the perception of National-Socialism is changing among sections of the Caucasian peoples of Europe and elsewhere. Changing away from the Establishment orthodoxy maintained since 1945 through an unprecedented propaganda campaign toward a historical revisionist understanding. That is, toward what is in practice now a heresy.

This concerns them as heresy always seems to concern religious and ideological cliques when they acquire power and influence with their response always seeming to be repression and, latterly, since the Middle Ages, censorship which in our modern societies involves a 'cancel culture' and introducing laws based on some manufactured abstraction such as "holocaust denial" which criminalizes the public expression of opinions about a particular matter which the Establishment does not approve of, just as zealous Protestants in England centuries ago criminalized the public expression of Catholic views and the performance of the Catholic Mass, and just as zealous 'revolutionaries' in 18th century France condemned and guillotined Catholic priests and nuns for being "anti-revolutionary" one of which acts was memorialised over a hundred and sixty years later by composer Francis Poulenc in his *Dialogues des Carmélites*.

A quite minor part of this new understanding, this new heresy, may have been what one antifascist described over two decades ago as my 'revisionist' version of National-Socialism with its emphasis on honour and what that implied in real life for modern National-Socialists. Hence my 1997 essay *The Disease of Suspicion* in which I wrote:

"There is a blight spreading on our noble Cause, a blight spread by our enemies. This blight, this spreading infection, is Suspicion.

This most usual and visible form which this infectious blight takes is: 'He/she is an agent/informer for the Police/the Government...' Sometimes, however, Suspicion is simply a rumour about a person's past or their personal character.

Our enemies have deliberately bred this infection of Suspicion to weaken us, to divide us among ourselves. They have found it be a powerful weapon in their fight against us, for many who are supposed to on our side in the war of freedom we are fighting have become infected with Suspicion, and go around infecting others with this blight, this poison. There is now almost a state of paranoia on our side, with people spreading rumours and allegations, and wondering whether a certain Comrade is really a government agent or an informer.

We must understand this - Suspicion is behaviour unbecoming a warrior. What is unbecoming for a warrior is what is dishonourable and unfair. It is dishonourable conduct and thus contemptible.

It is a betrayal of everything we stand for and believe in, as warriors. It is a betrayal of our noble ideal of loyalty, of comradeship. To spread Suspicion, to believe in rumours and allegations about individuals - however well-supported or 'documented' such rumours and allegations seem - is undignified, the sign of a weak character. It is a betrayal of our noble standards of personal conduct - a descent down toward the level

of the uncivilized people we despise and are fighting.

Suspicion is un-warrior like because a true warrior only and ever makes a personal judgement about any individual after having personally met that individual on a number of occasions because this is the honourable, the fair, thing to do. They have thus spent some time with that person and so therefore can make their own personal and direct assessment of the character of that individual. The warrior thing to do - not having met an individual and not having spent time with that individual - is to reserve one's judgement, and make no personal comment at all about the individual's character, motives or anything else.

Furthermore, any person who says or writes anything which calls into question the honour of any individual, must be prepared to face that individual and repeat the allegations, rumours or suspicion directly to that individual, and be prepared to fight that individual in a fair fight or a duel if the individual whose honour is brought into question desires to so defend his honour. This is the warrior thing to do, this is the honourable thing to do. Thus, anyone who raises doubts about a person, who spreads any rumour about them, or who is suspicious about the motives or the character of a person, must repeat any and all allegations to that person, face-to-face, and give that person a chance to defend themselves. Anything less is un-warrior like and cowardly.

To destroy this infection of Suspicion, this blight upon our Cause which is harming us and our fight for freedom, we have to do the honourable thing. The honourable thing to do is to maintain a dignified silence." [7]

This was at the time when former Combat 18 member Wilf Browning and his supporters were spreading rumours about Charlie Sargent, the founder of Combat 18. I had given Charlie and his brother Steve a personal pledge of loyalty, on my honour, so I naturally supported him. The crises led to Charlie's close friend Martin Cross killing a Browning supporter with both Martin and Charlie arrested for murder.

Browning then co-operated with the Police and testified against them at their criminal trial, leading me to publicly challenge him to a duel with deadly weapons. He dishonourably ignored the challenge and made jokes about it. Browning would later be lauded in book written by an anti-fascist and described as "a fearless fighter", as "revered in Europe" and as "loyal" when the exact opposite was true.

Such widely-read writings of mine, expounded in various essays and then in later editions of my The National-Socialist newsletter published in support of the National-Socialist Movement, quite naturally annoyed certain anti-fascists far more than I had annoyed them in the past by my 1970s street activism and by having my *Vindex - Destiny of the West* published in America in 1984 which was widely distributed around the world. [8]

An annoyance which seemed to me to have become a hatred because of my profuse 1990s writings concerning honour which rationally countered the Establishment version of 'nazism' which they had spent decades assiduously propagating; and because of my support of Combat 18 and of Charlie against Browning.

One anti-fascist in particular appeared to have a particular hatred of me resulting in a concerted campaign to publicly discredit me; someone now part of the Establishment having been awarded an MBE in 2016 by the then British government and appointed by them to be part of their Commission for Countering Extremism. Perhaps unsurprisingly this person was the author of the book that praised Browning.

This concerted smear campaign began with a special edition of the anti-fascist Searchlight magazine in 1998 headlined *The Most Evil Nazi In Britain* and included what one essayist termed The Infamous Post Box Interview. [9] As I wrote in *A Reply To Allegations*,

<quote> "For over twenty years, journalists, those opposed to National-Socialism, and dishonourable, egotistical weak-willed rumour-mongers among the so-called racial-nationalist 'Movement', have been circulating rumours and making allegations about my personal involvement with Occultism and Satanism. This is despite the fact that I have denied and do deny ever having been a 'Satanist', and despite the fact that I have stated many times that I regard Satanism as decadent and morally wrong. These rumours and allegations were started by, and are still circulated by, my enemies for one simple reason - to try and discredit me personally. For, if I can be discredited in such a way, people will not take seriously what I have written about National-Socialism and what I have done for this most noble of Causes. When I write or say that National-Socialism and the Occult are incompatible, I mean it. When I condemn Satanism as un-Aryan, as morally wrong, I mean it." [10] [11] </quote>

§ I am going into Combat 18 because this involvement during that period created the mythology of you. Inadvertently this mythologic view of you has been more influential than anything you have written. I see Combat 18 and the mess of the late 90s after the nail bombings as been the focal point that turned you from the person into the Idea. Does it feel that this Idea of you of which you have no control over is something you are trying to regain control?

The concepts of me as 'myth' and Idea are new to me and not something I agree with or am comfortable with. In 2021, when asked if I agreed with what one academic wrote, which was that I was "driven by a search for meaning and purpose, as well as an intellectual desire to find and create the all-encompassing and perfect political philosophy", I said I did not agree because

"during my National-Socialist decades I was driven by a somewhat fanatical desire to not only propagate what I then believed National-Socialism to be - an honourable, noble, way of life, a practical presencing of the

numinous - but also to recruit people to that cause in the hope of creating a National-Socialist society in the land of my ancestors [...] During my years as a Muslim I nurtured a similar desire to propagate what I then believed the Muslim way of life to be: which again was an honourable, noble, way of life, and a practical presencing of the numinous.

There was thus no search for 'meaning and purpose' because I foolishly believed I had already found a meaning and a purpose: for thirty years in National-Socialism and then for ten years in Islam. In 1998 I turned away from National- Socialism to Islam because during a decade (1988-1998) of foreign travels the culture, the Muslims, of the Muslim lands - and especially of Egypt - slowly, almost imperceptibly, impressed me as did, and perhaps more so, travels alone in the Sahara Desert where I wordlessly felt intimations of Being, of The Acausal, of The-Unity, of The One-The Only (τὸ ἓν), of The Monas (μονάς) which 'acausal' Being Muslims called Allah and Christians called God." [12]

As I noted in Myngath, [13] "In a literal way, Islam taught me humility, something I aspired to during my time as a monk but which my then prideful nature rebelled against."

In essence, therefore, as I sought to explain in Myngath, I was an opinionated, selfish often fanatical person who from youth and for some thirty years arrogantly believed he could and should "make a difference" and who caused suffering to others but who, mostly against his will, slowly, very slowly seemed to learn from his experiential life in the process acquiring a certain humility and perhaps an understanding of himself leading to the formulation of a weltanschauungen based on empathy and honour.

Therefore trying to control such a myth and Idea is, for me, irrelevant.

§ The connections to the occult, Julius Evola and hermeticism seeming to be the most influential, along with old Greek and European pagan systems of honour. To put it simply [they] seem to be your main connection to the occult. I do not believe you are Anton Long, Some claim you infiltrated occult groups like the O9A to move them towards National Socialism. But the question I ask is has the Idea of you I keep mentioning that was seemingly created in the late 90s taken over again?

My interest in ancient Greek literature began as a schoolboy in the Far East but waned when I arrived in Blighty in the 1960s and became involved in practical politics, specifically Colin Jordan's British Movement. It returned when I was a monk and began learning what was then termed New Testament Greek. Discussions with two other monks led me to begin a scholarly study of the Greek text of the Corpus Hermeticum which I was familiar with from my reading of Jung and the few alchemical texts I could obtain while in prison in 1975 and which intuitively inspired the creation of my Star Game during that holiday at Her Majesty's Pleasure.

As for honour, what initially inspired me in the late 1960s were the actions of Otto Ernst Remer, a recipient of the Knights Cross with Oak Leaves, in July 1944. Some years later Remer presented me with a photograph of him taken after the battle of Kharkov in 1943.

In 2012, then over three score years old, I finally had leisure enough to begin translating and writing commentaries on the tractates of the Corpus Hermeticum that most interested me.

What others may infer and have inferred from all this, they have and do. As for influence, I can only quote what TS Eliot wrote in Little Gidding:

If you came this way,  
Taking any route, starting from anywhere,  
At any time or at any season,  
It would always be the same: you would have to put off  
Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,  
Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity  
Or carry report. You are here to kneel  
Where prayer has been valid.

ooo

### Part Three

§ Today I had an Ethiopian Muslim Uber driver, we talked about Islam; by the time I arrived at my appointment for the first time since disconnecting myself from Islam in 2020 during my divorce I was at a point where I wanted to run to the nearest Masjid, Prey and revert once more back into being a Muslim. I bring this up because this made me think of you and this was not only unexpected but an extreme longing to cast all aside and dedicate it all to Islam once more. Has this happened to you since you left Islam?

Yes, several times, in the year I publicly made known my own disconnection from the Muslim way of life. I missed daily Namaz, especially Jumma Namaz and the feeling of belonging and humility it had engendered in me. Suffice to say the Muslim way of life had a profound and positive, and in hindsight morally necessary, effect on me. But remembrance of the life and especially the deaths of Frances and Sue caused me to continue to seek answers to questions regarding exegesis of certain sacred texts, of the dialectic particular interpretations seemed to imply because they were founded on denotata, and the nature of empathy and honour which I felt had a personal horizon not



a supra-personal one codified by a religion or by a particular interpretation of some text.

§ During your time as a Muslim, many perceive that period as being some kind of O9A Insight role. I happened to believe you were sincere, given your writings, your obvious extensive knowledge of Islam and your assimilation into Muslim communities. Only a seasoned Foreign Intelligence Officer could do what you have done if you were not sincere. I understand this as I have travelled and lived in Islamic countries and communities overseas and they would have known very quickly if I was not sincere. In fact, it could have gotten me killed in some places. I want the above to be known as an example of your sincerity and how dangerous your travels less known could be. Reflecting about that period do you regret it?

What others believe or allege about my peregrinations as a Muslim, my rejection of all extremisms, and indeed about involvement with a particular Occult movement, is their belief or their allegation howsoever such a belief or allegation came-into-being and persists within them, and no longer concerns me.

My concern is, and has been for over a decade, seeking to not cause suffering through deeds or words, and finding something expiatory for the suffering I caused because of my past extremism and selfishness.

All I have found in respect of expiation in the past decade or so is to develop and make known the weltanschauung derived from what believe I have learned since the death of Frances in 2006; to publicly express my regret regarding my extremist past, and my fallible understanding of such matters as extremism.

What others believe or allege about such a making-known, such a weltanschauung, such an understanding, is what they believe or allege. Thus, in reference to sincerity, as Seneca wrote: Quia pars honesti non potest esse nisi honestum, nec summum bonum habebit sinceritatem suam, si aliquid in se viderit dissimile meliori. [14] Which returns me to what I wrote in 2012: "quite simply it is matter of honour. Of personal knowing," and that since 1975

"only four people, on hearing or learning about such rumours and allegations, have had the decency to ask me, in person, 'for my side of the story'. The first was Colin Jordan, the second was John Tyndall, the third was Steve Sargent, and the fourth was a Muslim whom I came to greatly admire and to whom I gave a personal pledge of loyalty." [15]

All those individuals took the trouble to get to know me personally over a period of time, and it was that personal pledge of loyalty to a Muslim living overseas that made my interior struggle about formulating my own weltanschauung longer and more difficult than it might otherwise have been.

§ Leaving Islam can be dangerous, you and I are both apostates from Islam, of which in most schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence carries the death penalty. As I asked regarding Combat 18 and NS movements possibly taking reprisals, of which you illuminated me on the situation. I must ask has there been any reprisals attempted towards you by Islamic groups or individuals because of been seen as an apostate?

Not so far. As Sophocles wrote: ὥς πεπρωμένης οὐκ ἔστι θνητοῖς συμφορᾶς ἀπαλλαγή. [16]

§ Regarding extremism, for most people who become radical from various movements, most do not move from theory into practice of views western society perceives as extreme. You however took that extra step, and despite not agreeing on certain things, I do respect that you went all in putting forth your convictions publicly given the risks involved. Knowing the stakes, you were not typical regarding the movements you were involved with. Regarding acting on beliefs (not necessarily extremism but any counter establishment ideology) do you believe that one must act on their convictions as you did, or is the personal suffering it causes to themselves and others as you reflected on too great to risk?

A relevant question. During my extremist decades I did believe it was necessary to act in practical ways based on one's often fanatical commitment to some ideology or some supra-personal religious or social Cause and which commitment meant that the goal of some ideology or Cause was considered more important than the suffering caused.

But my experiences, and especially outdoor labour on a farm, gradually over years, brought the realization that this was immoral and that no ideology, no -ism, no Cause, no religion, nothing supra-personal - whatever the rhetoric or written or interior excuse - justified causing suffering and thus perpetuating the cycle of suffering, millennia after millennia. That what was moral was, could be, known through empathy and honour with their local personal horizon; and could not be, should not be, codified in any supra-personal way such as in a principle such as Jus Ad Bellum. I attempted to explain all this in my 2013 text Questions of Good, Evil, Honour, and God [17] and later works.

§ Regarding Reichsfolk and the changing of National Socialist Ideology during the mid-1990s to the 2000s. You and a few other figures quite heretically moved from Neo-Nazi orthodoxy. Especially changing the perspective regarding Islam. Utilizing a historical precedent of Islamic collusion with the Nazi party before and during the war and the Islamic SS units, the Bosnian SS been an example you used. How did people within the NS movement react to this, as despite the historical precedent Islam has been a focal point of attack by Neo-Nazi organisations for decades, Combat 18 in Australia focused almost entirely on fighting Islam. What was the reaction?

The reaction of some people, especially in Finland, Sweden, and Germany, was positive while there was a negative reaction in places such as America and Britain. As for Combat 18 in Britain it had effectively, in terms of street action, ceased to exist mostly due to Charlie's conviction for murder and Browning's betrayal by being a witness for the Prosecution at his trial; but partly because so many seemed to dishonourably believe the disinformation, the lies, about

Charlie spread by Browning and his supporters, and by anti-fascists such as in a World in Action television programme whose anti-fascist Associate Producer would later be fêted by the British government who awarded him an MBE. The programme, as some newspaper articles did, spread the disinformation that Charlie was a informer for the Police and for MI5.

Apropos Islam, I went on, during my campaign to bring National-Socialists and Muslims together, to write tracts such as the multi-part *The National-Socialist Guide to Understanding Islam*. Which again were well-received in some quarters but disliked in others.

§ Continuing on from Reichsfolk, you and figures like Varg Vikernes during that period of the late 1990s, changed perspectives on Slavic races, Russians and Serbians being a good example as they are hated by orthodox Nazis given Hitlers writings on them in Mein Kampf. What changed your mind on ethnic Slavs? For bringing Slavs into NS movements has changed things dramatically. Being from a Serb background and having friends who joined Combat 18 and other NS movements, I was a cause of much argument between Neo-Nazis, this was the late 2000s. Most were very orthodox but some like yourself had or developed different perspectives. Unlike with Islam there is less of a historical precedent regarding Russians and Serbs, but I know there was some especially during the end of the war. But I won't go into that; my point is, I know things have changed regarding Slavs in some movements, so how or what caused your perspective to change?

Apropos Slavs, the reason was my understanding of National-Socialism as applicable to all ethnicities, not just to Northern Europeans; a matter I wrote about many times including in *Esoteric Hitlerism: Idealism, the Third Reich and the Essence of National-Socialism*.

Apropos Islam, there were two reasons. The first was my travels in Egypt and the Muslim world between 1988 and 1998 which began my admiration for the Muslim way of life. The second was being introduced to National Socialists such as Leon Degrelle and Otto Ernst Remer. Remer, for example, lived for a while after the war in Egypt and became adviser to Gamal Abdel Nasser, was acquainted with Yasser Arafat and a comrade of Omar Amin, a Waffen-SS officer living in Egypt who had converted to Islam.

§ Regarding the occult, I am satisfied with your answer, the old Greek translations, your background regarding Christianity, interest in Hermeticism it all makes sense. To me it seems people involved in the O9A have incorporated your work into their material. I do not believe you are the person the media and misdirected Niners think you are. As you said Satanism is Decadent, and you are right, I talk about it a lot especially regarding the French late 1800s decadent literary movement with books like *Là-Bas* by Joris-Karl Huysmans. It does not fit in with your NS or Islamic work. Am I correct on this perspective?

Indeed. But that will not of course change the opinion of those who for whatever reason and from whatever motive believe otherwise. I have expressed my views regarding the Occult and alleged involvement with a certain Occult movement many times since the 1990s, including in the tract *Occultism and National-Socialism* first published in New Zealand in 1997, in my A Reply To Allegations which I quoted from in a previous answer, in a 1998 recorded interview with the aforementioned antifascist fêted by the British government, and in my 2012 *A Matter Of Honour*. [15]

But, as I have mentioned before in other writings, they and their perception are of this era, and in the perspective of millennia the perception of a person by others often changes or more often perhaps the person will be forgotten, whatever efforts those of this or any era may go to in the belief that their particular perception will last 'forever'.

§ To quote you in a difficult question: "The concepts of me as 'myth' and Idea are new to me and not something I agree with or am comfortable with." I find your reaction to the concept I put forth of you becoming a myth very interesting. But because of the media attention people on many sides have this absolutely bizarre perspective of you. Many thinking you're a secret O9A founder who is also Anton Long and doing Insight roles since the 60s. I have met people who believe this and admire you because of this belief. Then the mainstream media perspective is essentially the same, like it or not, but I hope to bring this back to reality with this interview. Is there any statement you may like to make?

Being now past my three score years and ten I have lost interest in how or why I am now perceived as I am by some people or may be perceived after my death. But, such is the nature of some older folk, to reminisce about one's past, and to pontificate in general, often is or becomes a minor pleasure.

Yet, as it often is, the final verdict on a person will be centuries from the era in which they lived, if they are remembered at all for whatever reason and, if they are remembered, in the intervening period the verdict may change from century to century.

But this is all dependant on whether and for how long we as a species survive and whether or not in a hundred or a thousand years there are stable communities where knowledge and reason and scholarship are valued and taught to a new generation.

David Myatt  
March 2023 CE

## Footnotes

URL's valid as of March 2023

[1] CIA archive: <https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound>. The original text is at <http://tinyurl.com/22zb4389>

The original is at: [https://web.archive.org/web/20080611081331/http://www.davidmyatt.info/significance\\_taliban.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20080611081331/http://www.davidmyatt.info/significance_taliban.html)

[2] Mark Weitzmann, *Anti-Semitism and Terrorism*, in Diemel, Hans-Liudger (ed), *Terrorism and the Internet: Threats, Target Groups, Deradicalisation Strategies*. NATO Science for Peace and Security Series, vol. 67. IOS Press, 2010. pp.16-17.

[3] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

[4] <https://www.davidmyatt.info/dm-three-interviews.pdf>

[5] *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-ns-writings/myatt-ns-writings.pdf>

[6] The article is available in *National-Socialism and Islam: The Case for Co-Operation*, <https://cosmicreich.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/ns-islam.pdf>

[7] The article is quoted in Rachael Stirling's 2021 monograph *The Peregrinations Of David Myatt: National Socialist Ideologist*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-peregrinations-ideologist/dm-ns-ideologue-second-edition.pdf>

[8] *Vindex - Destiny of the West*, a facsimile at <https://archive.org/download/myatt-vindex-destiny-west/myatt-vindex-destiny-west.pdf>

[9] The item is from Part Two of *Modern Tale Of An Antifascist Propagandist*, <https://concerningmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/09/a-modern-tale.pdf>

[10] The essay A Reply to Allegations is included in *Selected National Socialist Writings Of David Myatt*, <https://archive.org/download/myatt-ns-writings/myatt-ns-writings.pdf>

[11] See also the 1997 essay *Occultism and National-Socialism*, [https://archive.org/download/myatt-occult-ns\\_202303/myatt-occult-ns.pdf](https://archive.org/download/myatt-occult-ns_202303/myatt-occult-ns.pdf)

[12] Three Interviews, <https://www.davidmyatt.info/dm-three-interviews.pdf>

[13] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/david-myatt-myingath.pdf>

[14] De Vita Beata, 7.15.1

[15] <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/08/a-matter-of-honour.pdf>

[16] Antigone, 1337-8, "mortals cannot be delivered from the misfortunes of their fate."

[17] Included in *Religion, Empathy, and Pathei-Mathos*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/religion-and-empathy.pdf>

o o o o o o o

## Addendum

### David Myatt: Analysing National Socialism

Two essays - both written in January 2012 and titled *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism and Hitler, National-Socialism, and Politics: A Personal Reappraisal* - are relevant for those interested in Myatt's rejection of extremism and in his current views regarding Hitler and nazism.

As he noted in 2014, his

"writings, post-2011, were and are really dialogues: interiorly with myself and externally with a few friends or the occasional person who has contacted me and expressed an interest." [2]

In his *Letter To My Undiscovered Self*, published in 2012, he wrote:

"That it took me four decades, and the tragic death of two loved ones, to discover [such] simple truths surely

reveals something about the person I was and about the extremisms I championed and fought for. Now, I - with Sappho - not only say that, I love delicate softness:

For me, love has brought the brightness  
And the beauty of the Sun....

but also that a personal, mutual, love between two human beings is the most beautiful, the most sacred, the most important, the most human, thing in the world; and that the peace that most of us hope for, desire in our hearts, only requires us to be, to become, loving, kind, fair, empathic, compassionate, human beings." [3]

Myatt ends by writing:

"There is thus, based on applying the moral criteria of The Numinous Way, a complete rejection by me of National-Socialism - of whatever kind - and an understanding of Hitler as a flawed individual who caused great suffering and whose actions and policies were dishonourable and immoral"

The source of the two texts is <https://web.archive.org/web/20221102053427/https://www.davidmyatt.info/dwm-problems-ns.pdf>

ooo

[1] Dated, because many of the texts referenced in these old essays are to Myatt's pre-2012 'numinous way' and which texts are now only available in archived versions of his website and weblog, such as at  
(i) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130602171008/http://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/> and  
(ii) <https://web.archive.org/web/20130704131205/http://www.davidmyatt.info/>

[2] *Some Questions For DWM 2014*, <https://davidmyatt.wordpress.com/questions-for-dwm-2014/>

[3] The letter was included in his *Understanding and Rejecting Extremism: A Very Strange Peregrination*, <https://davidmyatt.files.wordpress.com/2022/10/david-myatt-rejecting-extremism.pdf>

The translation of part of a fragment of a poem by Sappho is by Myatt, with the Greek text (P. Oxyrhynchus. XV (1922) number 1787, fr. 1 and 2) being ἔγω δὲ φίλημ' ἀβροσύναν [...] τοῦτο καὶ μοι τὸ λάμπρον ἔρωσ ἀελίω καὶ τὸ κάλον λέλογχε

ooo

## Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism

### Introduction

This essay is a brief analysis of the National-Socialist weltanschauung, as manifested in National-Socialist Germany, and according to the philosophical and ethical criteria of my Numinous Way, and which criteria derive from the principles of empathy, compassion, and personal honour.

Empathy, as understood by my philosophy of The Numen [1], establishes a particular ontology and epistemology; Being, the source of beings, as both causal and acausal, and of an acausal knowing distinct from the causal knowing of conventional philosophy and empirical science [2]. The ethical criteria are manifest in both compassion and honour [3], so that:

"the morality of The Numinous Way is therefore defined by a personal honour, a personal compassion, and the personal virtue of justice. For justice is not some abstract concept, but rather a personal virtue, as εὐταξία is a personal virtue. For justice is the personal virtue of fairness; the quality of balance." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

The National-Socialism evident in NS Germany was a way of life centred around concepts such as duty, kampf, nation, and race. Thus, the individual was judged by, and expected to judge others by, the criteria of race, with particular races assigned a certain value (high or low), as individuals were judged by how well they adhered to the duty they were expected to do in respect of their nation (their land, their people) and the race they were said to belong to or believed they belonged to. In addition, kampf between individuals, races, and nations was considered healthy and necessary, with such struggle revealing the worth of individuals and thus those considered fit to lead and assume positions of authority.

### Collectivism, Nationalism, and Race

The National-Socialist way of life was - given such concepts as kampf, nation and race - a collective one, with one of the highest virtues being the willingness of individuals, if necessary, to sacrifice their own happiness and welfare, and even their lives, for the good of their people, their land, their race. The necessity of this virtue was explained, in part, by the belief that the German volk had an historic mission, a particular destiny, so that - coupled with the ideas of race and kampf - the individual was expected to define themselves, to understand themselves, as Germans and as having

particular duties and obligations; in effect, to replace their own self-identity with the collective identity of the volk.

In order to establish, maintain, and expand this collectivism, certain measures were regarded as necessary, as morally correct, with such measures including military conscription, laws designed to criminalize certain activities, both political and personal, and harsh punishment of those contravening such laws.

In addition, the führerprinzip was applied to most aspects of life, with individuals expected to accept and obey the authority so established, since such authority was considered to manifest the will, the ethos, of the volk. Hence the loyalty individuals gave, as an expression of their recognized duty as Germans, was personal; not to 'the State' nor even to 'the nation', and certainly not to some government, but rather to individuals who were regarded as embodying the will, the identity, of the volk. In practice, this meant Adolf Hitler and those appointed by him or by his representatives, and it was this collectivism, this binding of the volk by the führerprinzip, that Heidegger tried to philosophically express in his now controversial remarks regarding the Volksgemeinschaft and by quoting some words attributed to Aeschylus [4].

There are thus six elements that, from the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way, may be said to define the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler. These are:

- (i) a collective identity and its acceptance;
- (ii) authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority;
- (iii) mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority;
- (iv) the use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth;
- (v) the use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity; and
- (vi) the use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – kampf – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

### **Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler**

In purely practical terms, the acceptance and use of the principle of kampf together with the acceptance of Hitler as embodying the collective will of the volk, inevitably led to the military defeat of NS Germany. For all mortals are fallible and military defeat is always inevitable, given time and even if such a defeat has internal, not external, causes. For tyrants and monarchs die, are overthrown, or are killed; Empires flourish for a while – a few centuries perhaps, at most – and then invariably decline and fade away; oligarchies come and go with monotonous regularity, lasting a decade or perhaps somewhat longer; rebellions and revolutions will break out, given sufficient time, and will often succeed given even more time – decades, centuries – and even following repeated and brutal repression.

Thus, philosophically, the general error here by Hitler and his followers was the obvious one of ὕβρις. A lack of understanding, an unknowing, of the natural balance – of δίκη - as well as a lack of empathy, manifest as this unknowing, this lack, was in the arrogant belief of a personal and a volkish 'destiny' combined with a belief in kampf as a natural and necessary expression of human nature. And ὕβρις φυτεύει τύραννον - that is, ὕβρις plants, is the seed of, the τύραννον. Thus, symbolically, we might justifiably say that the Ἐρινύες took their revenge, for Hitler and his followers had forgotten, scorned, or never known the wisdom, the truth, that their fallible mortal lives are subject to, guided by, Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἐρινύες [5].

Thus their fate was destined, a fate that Sophocles expressed so well in respect of Oedipus, tyrannus:

ὦ πάτρας Θήβης ἔνοικοι, λεύσσετ', Οἰδίπους ὄδε,  
ὃς τὰ κλείν' αἰνίγματ' ἤδει καὶ κράτιστος ἦν ἀνὴρ,  
οὗ τίς οὐ ζήλω πολιτῶν ἦν τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων,  
εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα δεινῆς συμφορᾶς ἐλήλυθεν.  
ὥστε θνητὸν ὄντα κείνην τὴν τελευταίαν ἰδεῖν  
ἡμέραν ἐπισκοποῦντα μηδέν' ὀλβίζειν, πρὶν ἂν  
τέρμα τοῦ βίου περάσῃ μηδὲν ἀλγυνὸν παθῶν. [6]

In effect, therefore, and in general terms, the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler was un-wise; based on a misunderstanding of human nature, and he himself shown, despite his remarkable achievement of gaining power, as lacking a reasoned, a well-balanced, judgement [σωφρονεῖν] – since such a balanced judgement would, as Aeschylus explained in the Oresteia, reveal that πόλεμος [7] always accompanies ὕβρις and that only by acceptance of the numinous authority of πάθει μάθος (the new law presented to mortals by immortal Zeus) could the tragic cycle of ἔρις be ended.

### **A Numinous View of The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler**

Let us now consider the six points enumerated above, in respect of the philosophical and ethical viewpoint of The Numinous Way. As mentioned in my essay *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*:

"The essence of the numinous view – of the ethical way posited by the Philosophy of The Numen – is empathy and thus the acausal (the affective and effecting) connexion we, as individuals, are to all life, sentient and otherwise, with empathy being the foundation of our conscious humanity.

The practical criteria which empathy implies is essentially two-fold: the criteria of the cessation of suffering, and the criteria of the individual, personal, judgement in the immediacy of the moment. For the Philosophy of The Numen, these two criteria manifest the natural character of rational, conscious, empathic, human beings and thus express the nature of our humanity and of human culture, and which nature is manifest in a practical way in compassion and in personal honour.

Hence these two criteria are used, by The Numinous Way – by the Philosophy of The Numen – to judge our actions, our personal behaviour, and also all the abstractions we manufacture or may manufacture and which thus affect us, as individuals."

(i) A collective identity and its acceptance.

Empathy, as a natural if still under-used and under-developed human faculty, is only and ever individual and of the immediacy of the living moment. [8] It is always personal, individual, and cannot be abstracted out from an individual living being – that is, it cannot have any causal ideation or be represented by or expressed by someone else.

There is the personal, individual, freedom that the knowing that empathy uniquely presents to the individual, and therefore no need of, no sense of, belonging to other than one's immediate surroundings, and no sense of identity beyond the personally known, for all human beings encountered are encountered and empathically known as they uniquely are: as individuals with their own lives, feelings, hopes, and with their own potential and their own past.

Which in essence means The Numinous Way is the way of individuals, and an individual manner of living to be accepted or rejected according to the individual. Thus such a collective identity – and a desire for and acceptance of such an identity – is contrary to this very individual numinous way.

What matters for The Numinous Way is the individual; their empathy, their honour; their personal judgement. What does not matter are supra-personal manufactured abstractions such as a 'nation'. Consequently, the empathic, honourable, individual only has a duty to themselves, to their immediate kin, and to those personally given a pledge of loyalty: not a duty or obligations to some manufactured collective identity however such identity be expressed.

(ii) Authority and its acceptance manifest in specific individuals and expected obedience to such authority.

As I wrote in *Authority and Legitimacy in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*:

"For The Numinous Way, it is the exercise of the judgement of the individual – arising from the use of empathy and the guidance that is personal honour – that is paramount, and which expresses our human nature.

That is, it is honour, the understanding that empathy provides, and the judgement of the individual, that are legitimate, moral, numinous, and thence the basis for authority. This means that authority resides in and extends only to individuals – by virtue of their honour, their empathy, and manifest in their own personal judgement, and therefore this always personal individual authority cannot be abstracted out from such personal judgement of individuals. In practical terms, this is a new type of authority – that of the individual whose concern is not power over others but over themselves, and which type of power is manifest in a living by honour, and thence in their self-responsibility and in how they interact with others."

Thus, such non-individual authority, acceptance of and obedience to such authority, is contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iii) Mandatory enforceable punishment of those contravening or not accepting such authority and the laws made by such authority.

Given that, for The Numinous Way, authority and justice are individual and manifest in individual judgement and through personal honour, such mandatory punishment by some abstract authority is quite contrary to The Numinous Way.

(iv) The use of particular abstractions (for example nation and race) as a criteria for judgement and for evaluating individual worth.

According to both empathy and honour, such a judgement of others, such prejudice, on the basis of some abstraction such as perceived race or 'nationality' is immoral [9]. The only moral, honourable, criteria is to judge individuals as individuals, sans all abstractions, on the basis of a personal knowing of them extending over a duration of causal Time. To judge en masse, without such a direct, personal, extended, personal knowing of each and every individual is reprehensible.

In addition, it is immoral – unempathic, uncompassionate, dishonourable – to treat people on the basis of their assumed or alleged race or nationality. Thus, the enforced herding of people into 'concentration camps' on the basis of alleged, assumed, race or nationality is quite unjustifiable, inhuman.

(v) The use of particular abstractions as a criteria for identity.

Such abstractions included 'blood' and nationality, so that identity became a matter of individuals being classified – by themselves, others, and by the State – according to certain chosen abstract criteria based on 'race' and heritage. Thus there were distinct notions, distinct levels, of separateness.

Empathy, however, presents us with an acausal-knowing of life, human and otherwise, and this knowing is of ourselves as but one fallible, biologically fragile, mortal, microcosmic nexion, and thus of how our self, our perceived and singular separate self-identity, is appearance and not an expression of the true nature of our being [10], which nature is one of connexions, between living emanations, not one of separations.

Such a revealing of our nature reveals that we should act with empathy and honour in the knowledge that our actions affect others or can affect others, directly, indirectly, emotionally, and acausally. That their joy, their pain, their suffering, their fate is ours by virtue of us as a connexion to them – as a connexion to all life; as one emanation of ψυχή [11].

What abstractions do is that they conceal our true empathic, compassionate, honourable nature and, ultimately, sever the connexion we are to ψυχή, to The Numen.

As mentioned in *On The Nature of Abstractions*:

"The error of abstractionism – of using existing abstractions and manufacturing other abstractions and using these as the source of ethics, of judgement, and so ascribing a value to them – is the error of ὕβρις (hubris). That is, the error of unbalance: of neglecting or being unaware of empathy, and of neglecting or being unaware of or profaning the numinous. In the personal and social sense, ὕβρις is revealed in a lack of compassion, a lack of balanced reasoning, and not only ascribing to one's self (or some other abstraction, such as a nation-State) what is assumed to be the perfection of right and of good (or the best current approximation of it) but also acting on that presumption to the detriment, the harm, of others.

This is unethical – as all abstractions are inherently unethical – because what is ethical is determined by empathy, and thus cannot be abstracted out of that direct, immediate, and personal knowing which presences empathy in us, as human beings."

(vi) The use and acceptance of a particular abstraction – kampf – as an embodiment and expression of human nature.

As mentioned previously, in the *Contra The National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler* section, kampf as principle, as abstraction, is a manifestation of the error of ὕβρις and of a lack of empathy.

For empathy, and the cultivation of σωφρονεῖν, incline us toward – or should incline us, as individuals, toward – a letting-be; to wu-wei; to a living in the immediacy-of-the-moment. To being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being.

In addition:

"In The Numinous Way, a distinction is made between war and combat in that combat refers to gewin – similar to the old Germanic werra, as distinct from the modern krieg. That is, combat refers to a more personal armed quarrel between much smaller factions (and often between just two adversaries – as in single combat, and trial by combat) when there is, among those fighting, some personal matter at stake or some personal interest involved, with most if not all of those fighting doing so under the leadership of someone they personally know and respect and with the quarrel usually occurring in the locality or localities where the combatants live.

Thus, war is contrary to The Numinous Way – to the Cosmic Ethic – not only because of the impersonal suffering it causes, but also because it is inseparably bound up with individuals having to relinquish their own judgement, with them pursuing some lifeless un-numinous abstraction by violent means, and with the development of supra-personal abstract and thus un-numinous notions of 'justice' and law.

Hence, there is, for The Numinous Way, no such thing as a 'just war' – for war is inherently unjust and un-numinous. What is just and lawful are honourable individuals and their actions, and such combat as such individuals may honourably and personally undertake, and such violence as they may honourably and of necessity employ in pursuit of being fair and ensuring fairness." *War and Violence in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*

## Conclusion

It should thus be quite clear why The Numinous Way is contrary to and incompatible with the National-Socialism of Adolf Hitler that was manifest in National-Socialist Germany.

January 2012

Revised JD2455956.107

## Notes

[1] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen* and also *The Natural Balance of Honour – Honour, Empathy, and Compassion in the Philosophy of The Numinous Way*, from which this is a quote:

"As used and defined by The Numinous Way, empathy – ἐμπάθεια – is a natural human faculty: that is, a noble intuition about another human being or another living being. When empathy is developed and used, as

envisaged by The Numinous Way, it is a specific and extended type of συμπάθεια. That is, it is a type of and a means to knowing and understanding another human being and/or other living beings – and thus differs in nature from compassion."

[2] See: (i) *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*; (ii) *Some Notes Concerning Causality, Ethics, and Acausal Knowing*; (iii) *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality*.

[3] qv. *The Natural Balance of Honour*.

[4] In his 1933 speech at the University of Freiburg, where he quoted the following verse (v.514) from Prometheus Bound [my translation] –

τέχνη δ' ἀνάγκης ἀσθενεστέρα μακρῶ.

How so very feeble Craft is before Compulsion!

[5]

τίς οὖν ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν οἰακοστροφός.  
Μοῖραι τρίμορφοι μνήμονές τ' Ἑρινύες

Who then compels to steer us?  
Trimorphed Moirai with their ever-heedful Furies!

Aeschylus (attributed), Prometheus Bound, 515-6 [My translation]

[6]

You natives of Thebes: Observe – here is Oedipus, He who understood that famous enigma and was a strong man: What clansman did not behold that fortune without envy? But what a tide of problems have come over him! Therefore, look toward that ending which is for us mortals, To observe that particular day – calling no one lucky until, Without the pain of injury, they are conveyed beyond life's ending.

Oedipus Tyrannus, vv. 1524-1530 [My translation]

[7] In respect of πόλεμος see my *The Abstraction of Change as Opposites and Dialectic* where I suggest that as used by Heraclitus it implies neither kampf nor conflict, but rather – as a quote from Diogenes Laërtius suggests – what lies behind or beyond Phainómenon; that is, non-temporal, non-causal, Being. πόλεμος is thus that which is or becomes the genesis of beings from Being, and also that which manifests as δίκη and accompanies ἔρις because it is the nature of Πόλεμος that beings, born because of and by ἔρις, can be returned to Being (become bound together – be whole – again) by enantiodromia.

[8] Refer, for example, to *Introduction to The Philosophy of The Numen*

[9] See *Empathy and The Immoral Abstraction of Race* and also *On The Nature of Abstractions*.

[10] Refer for example to *Acausality, Phainómenon, and The Appearance of Causality* and also *An Introduction To The Ontology of Being*.

[11] Correctly understood – and as evident by the usage of Homer, Aeschylus, Aristotle, et al – ψυχή implies Life qua being.

ooo

## **Hitler, National-Socialism, and Politics A Personal Reappraisal**

### **Introduction – A Moral Perspective**

Almost exactly a year ago, I perhaps somewhat presumptuously, temerarily, penned a rather long essay entitled *The Uncertainty of Knowing* in reply to questions asked of me in relation to National-Socialism, Hitler, and my philosophy of The Numinous Way; and which essay itself was an attempt to elucidate another essay, the year before that, concerning Reichsfolk and a Muslim Khilafah. As I wrote at the beginning of my reply in *The Uncertainty of Knowing*:

"There are interesting, important and rather complex philosophical and ethical issues here, that require detailed, serious, and above all, rational, consideration. To explain, in a satisfactory manner, these issues and offer satisfactory answers would perhaps require a philosophical treatise of length equal to a book, and I have to admit that I currently possess no desire to write such a book, partly because I am aware that I may not have all or even many of the answers required, and that such answers as I do have, or some of them, might be erroneous and that therefore may need to be amended. Therefore, all I can do here is try in a rather unsatisfactory way to summarize such answers, such views, of mine."



In *The Uncertitude*, the title itself reflecting my concern and approach, I continued to emphasize that my replies were tentative and I – as a result of *πάθει μάθος*, of acknowledging my *ὑβρις* of decades – was open to correction and to further learning.

Over the past year I have continued to study, research, and reflect upon these 'complex philosophical and ethical issues' and have had cause, as I anticipated, to amend my conclusions, especially those in respect of National-Socialism, Hitler, and Reichsfolk, some of which new conclusions I have briefly mentioned in my essay, published this month, *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*, and which new conclusions led me to withdraw *The Uncertitude of Knowing*.

This further study and research, perhaps wyrdfully, included getting to know people who shared their personal and familial experiences of National-Socialist Germany with me, with these experiences being of those who were the subject of the Nürnberger Gesetze and who thus traumatically endured the consequences of those laws and the prejudice and hatred they codified. These direct experiences of the personal and moral effects of National-Socialism were those of individuals that I, through a personal knowing of them, considered to be honourable and which personal experiences thus served to place into perspective, into a moral – a numinous – perspective, the accounts given to me, decades earlier, of some German National-Socialists I had met who fought for and gave their loyalty to Adolf Hitler and which accounts had been formative of what became my decades-long dedication to the cause of National-Socialism, a dedication broken only by my personal experiences of Islam and by the *πάθει μάθος* that was the genesis of my philosophy of The Numinous Way.

As I mentioned in *The Uncertitude of Knowing*:

"All I know – all I say and write – derives from my own diverse personal experiences and my reflexion upon such experiences; from my experience of diverse ways of life, diverse religions, and by my interaction with individuals..."

Suffice therefore to say that my new encounter and interaction with particular people, my reflexion on those experiences, and my further study and research, has led me to a new personal learning, and to a better understanding of both the ethics of The Numinous Way and of the personal, the moral, implications of those ethics.

However, it is to be expected that some people will not like – nor others understand – where this new learning and my thinking have led me and may be leading me. But as TS Eliot beautifully expressed it in his poem *Little Gidding*:

And what you thought you came for  
Is only a shell, a husk of meaning  
From which the purpose breaks only when it is fulfilled If at all. Either you had no purpose  
Or the purpose is beyond the end you figured  
And is altered in fulfilment.

## **Ethical Consequences**

Empathy – as outlined in various essays including Introduction to *The Philosophy of The Numen* and *The Natural Balance of Honour* – is the basis for the ethics of The Numinous Way, with compassion and a personal honour being how we can, personally as individuals, be ethical in accord with the knowing, the understanding, the insight, that empathy reveals. This empathic revealing is of our affective and effecting connexion to other life, including human beings.

The immediacy of empathy in the living moment means a living-in, a dwelling-in, the moment, inclining us toward to wu-wei and, "to being compassionate and honourable human beings, concerned only with our own affairs, that of our family, and that of our immediate locality where we dwell, work, and have-our-being." *Some Philosophical and Moral Problems of National-Socialism*

There therefore cannot be, as mentioned in *A Brief Numinous View of Religion, Politics, and The State*, any desire for involvement with politics, since

"the goals, objectives and aims of politics are, by their very nature, based on human-manufactured divisions and categories deriving from a causal separation of beings: that is, which involve denoting individuals on the basis of some principle of inclusion/exclusion, and which principle of inclusion/exclusion (of separation of human beings) is immoral because un-numinous."

What is thus important, moral, numinous, are individuals who – feeling, knowing, suffering and its causes – live and who act with personal compassion and personal honour, with the boundary, the horizon, of such acts being, by the nature of empathy, of the nexion they are, and only and ever of the personal, immediate, local kind. In practical terms, there are and cannot be any supra-personal causes, agendas, aims, goals, for such things take us toward abstractions and beyond the bounds of empathy and of how The Numen is or becomes presenced in and through the personal experiencing of, an interaction with, other living beings: human, of Nature, of the Cosmos; and a personal experiencing which is direct, unfettered, undistorted, by any abstraction, by any prejudice, by any division – conscious or unconscious – into 'us' and 'the separate others'.

A consequence of this is that we can only – without causing more suffering or contributing to suffering – alleviate suffering, try to ameliorate what is wrong, by means of personal, direct, compassionate, honourable, acts when we

personally encounter suffering, dishonour. No cause, no movement, whether deemed political, social, or religious – nothing supra-personal involving us surrendering our individual judgement of empathy, our individual authority, and our personal honour – can alleviate suffering or ameliorate what is wrong, dishonourable, for such supra-personal things are among the causes of suffering or contribute to or will contribute to suffering, given our past and current human nature.

Hence the only moral change, the only revolution, that is possible – numinous, good – is that of ourselves; within and personal; and this is a reformation of ourselves and then our living of a moral, of an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life.

This precludes the possibility of such a moral individual supporting some cause, some group, some movement, some person, in the belief that such a cause, group, movement, or 'leader', can 'make a difference' or can or might in some way move us toward some future where there is less suffering.

Thus it is morally wrong – from the perspective of The Numinous Way – to suggest, as for example I previously did in *The Uncertainty of Knowing*, that a group such as Reichsfolk or a way such as Ahlus Sunnah wal-Jammah might be alternatives "capable of guiding honourable individuals to do what is honourable", and thus have "the ability to alleviate at least some of the suffering which blights this world." And wrong not only because such groups, such ways, are based on immoral abstractions – on principles of inclusion/exclusion – but also because their very nature, their very being, as groups and such ways are incompatible with The Numen, and so cannot and do not in any way presence the numinous or express the numinous since such numinosity only lives, dwells, is manifest – in the personal sense – by individuals leading or inclining toward leading an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life.

In brief, it is personal virtues such as εὐταξία – and their cultivation by individuals – which are important, required, moral, not some group, some organization, some 'leader', or some political aims and goals.

### **Adolf Hitler and National-Socialism**

For a long time, I regarded Adolf Hitler as a good man, an honourable man, and National-Socialism – especially my 'revised version' of National-Socialism manifest in Reichsfolk – as either an intimation of the numinous or as an expression of what is noble and honourable.

Now, in respect of Hitler, I ask two questions: (1) 'what is good' and my answer, manifest in The Numinous Way, is that what is good is what is compassionate; what alleviates suffering; what does not cause or contribute to suffering; what manifests love, empathy; and (2) 'what is honourable' and my answer is what is dignified, what manifests self-control, fairness; a balanced judgement.

How then does Hitler fare according to these criteria? Do his actions – manifest for example in the Nürnberger Gesetze and their consequences, in his use of krieg in pursuit of some supra-personal aim, and in the use of the abstractions of race and nation – reveal a man of compassion, of balanced judgement, of fairness? Someone who feels and understands the error that is ὕβρις and is therefore circumspect, in touch with and respectful of the numinous? Who knows the limits of appropriate human behaviour? No.

For example, there is nothing honourable in the Nürnberger Gesetze and their consequences; in the personal suffering, the deaths, they caused, in the prejudice and the hatred they engendered and codified. Nothing good in the use of krieg in pursuit of some supra-personal aim; in the suffering and the deaths caused. Nothing good or honourable in the demand for obedience and in the manipulation of people's emotions by rhetoric and propaganda; nothing good or honourable in the punishment of those who were inclined, as is morally right and justified, not to surrender their individual judgement and who thus refused to be obedient in such supra-personal matters, especially in relation to certain 'political' abstractions, such as 'race', nation, and the führerprinzip.

As someone once wrote: "Das war ein Vorspiel nur, dort wo man Bücher verbrennt, verbrennt man auch am Ende Menschen."

In respect of National-Socialism – new or old – I now ask similar questions to the ones asked in respect of Hitler. That is, can The Numen, the good, what is honourable, empathic, compassionate – what is moral – be manifest in, be presenced by, such a weltanschauung as National-Socialism? No.

No, for two simple reasons.

(i) Because such a weltanschauung has its very being in immoral abstractions, be they termed 'race', nation, volk, ethnicity, folk, or whatever; and is defined by the principle of inclusion/exclusion, by the separation and prejudgement of human beings by abstract criteria.

(ii) Because such a weltanschauung by its very nature is supra-personal, organized, authoritative, dogmatic, and numinosity only lives, dwells, is manifest – in the personal sense – by individuals leading or inclining toward leading an empathic, compassionate, honourable, life where there is no need of any authority, any judgement, any criteria, other than their own, deriving from their empathy and their unique πάθει μάθος.

There is thus, based on applying the moral criteria of The Numinous Way, a complete rejection by me of National-Socialism – of whatever kind – and an understanding of Hitler as a flawed individual who caused great suffering and whose actions and policies were dishonourable and immoral.

## Conclusion

The Numinous Way is, and can only ever be, an individual way; a non-political, non-religious, choice of individuals desirous of developing and using empathy and hopeful of leading honourable lives that do not cause or contribute to the suffering of living beings. Lives where one of the greatest virtues – a manifestation of our humanity – is considered to be a loyal and personal love between two human beings, regardless of the perceived or assumed ethnicity, nationality, social status, or 'sexual orientation', of the individuals concerned. As Sappho wrote, over two and half thousand years ago:

μνάσασθαί τινά φαιμι [καὶ ἕτερον] ἀμμέων... στᾶθι [κᾶντα] φίλος καὶ τὰν ἐπ' ὅσσοισ' ὀμπέτασον χάριν [1]

As for me, my journey of learning, of self-discovery, of making mistakes, of trying to acknowledge and correct my errors, of interior change via πάθει μάθος, does not yet seem to be ended.

January 30th 2012 ce

[1] Sappho, Fragments 147/138 [Lobel and Page].

My translation is:

Believe me, in the future someone  
Will remember us ...  
Because you love me  
Stand with me face to face  
And unveil the softness in your eyes ...

---

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International  
(CC BY-ND 4.0)

License and can be copied, distributed, and published, according to the terms of that license.

---